The Magazine for Advanced Comic Book Collectors

COMIC BOOK MARKET

No. 49
July 1997

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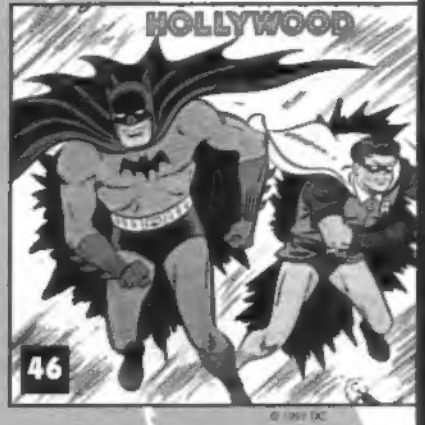

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Issue Number #49, July 1997

Where Robin ought to be...

Over the years, I've become more and more interested in British editions, especially DC (as you might guess). My fascination began with hardcover "annuals" reprinting great Wayne Boring Superman stories from the '50s, Tommy Tomorrow classics, and others. Then I discovered the "British editions" in comic book format (actually printed in Australia, but that's another story) with their reprinted and sometimes reworked covers.

At first, I enjoyed just identifying the original covers upon which the reprint was based. Then I discovered that occasionally the publishers would use interior art for a cover... or even draw brand new art. As you can imagine, all these variations were more "grist for the mill" for an obsessive collector like myself. Investigating and cataloging British edition DC-related covers became yet another wild comic book collecting adventure, full of new titles, new formats, new timelines, and sometimes even new art!

My favorite "Brit-Comic" discovery to date occurred just the other day as Beth Holley and I were re-examining the group of covers shown in this issue's cover gallery (see page 44). As we were noting some early *Super Comics* (which reprint *World's Finest* covers) something looked odd to me... really odd! On the cover of *Super* #2 (in a familiar pose from *Worlds Finest* # 40) is Superman, Batman, and... uh... holy substitutions... Superboy instead of Robin!!!

After the room stopped spinning and I caught my breath, I looked again to make sure. Yes... that is Superboy, drawn into Robin's position... complete with Robin's shorter length cape. Turns out *Super Comics* featured Superman, Batman, and Superboy... and so the editor's apparently felt the redraw was needed, completely ignoring the anomaly of Superman and Superboy (the same person) on the same cover! As a long-time DC collector, you can imagine how that *Super Comics* cover hit me over the head like a bombshell! I got so excited about this new discovery that Lisa intervened "they're just funnybooks after all ... try to stay calm and take it easy."

Stay calm? Take it easy? You must be kidding! I just found a DC cover with Superboy where Robin is supposed to be... and you're asking me to remain calm? Well I'm not calm... not at all! Just the opposite, in fact. All I can think about is telling my fellow hobbyists (especially those that specialize in Superman and Batman family titles) about this strange and wonderful wrinkle in the fabric of the DC universe!

So, dear CBM reader... the next time you happen to find a comic cover with Superboy where Robin ought to be and you get really excited about it, call me right away... "they're just funnybooks" isn't in my vocabulary!

Gary

Gary M. Carter

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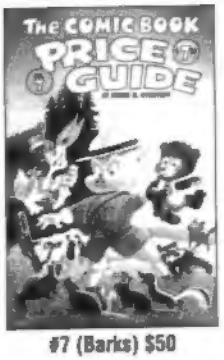
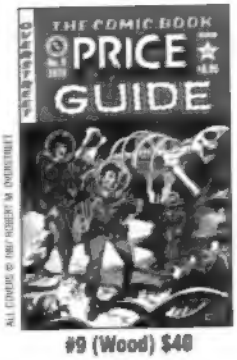
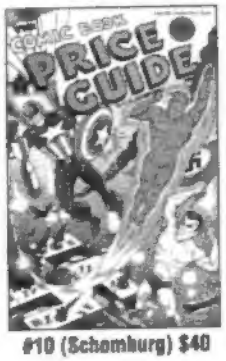


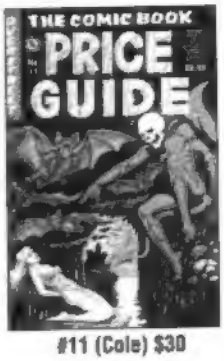
#7 (Barks) $50



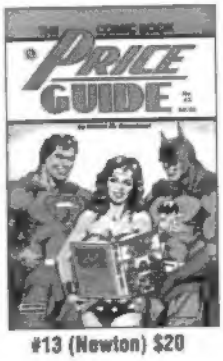
#9 (Wood) $40



#10 (Schomburg) $40



#11 (Cole) $30



#13 (Newton) $20

Tatjana & Howard

A couple of things caught my eye in CBM #46. Wood's mystery woman, pictured on page 79, certainly looks to me as if it could be Tatjana Wood. I didn't know her then, of course, but met her in 1977 when I started working for DC, where she was, and continues to be a colorist. Tatjana always had nice things to say about Wally, whom she kept in touch until shortly before his death. She was the colorist on his "King of the World" project in the 1980s--work she was very proud of.

In the Comic-Quizz, the last entry states that Howard Nostrand died in 1975. This may be a typo, but I lettered a piece he did for National Lampoon that was published in the April, 1983 issue, and met him at the National Lampoon offices at the time, probably in January 1983. That could have been his last published work, as I must admit, he didn't look at all well.

Todd Klein via e-mail

Letter from France

Would like to know if it's possible for me to order all your numbers of the Comic Book Marketplace?

Christian Krouch, Reims, France

Regrettably, Christian, many issues are already sold out. For those that are still available, please call our office at (619) 437-1996. We try to print a few extra at press time so that we can keep some back issues in stock for CBM readers and collectors... we just didn't anticipate the many requests. The good news is that many CBMers apparently pick up spare copies here and there and are often willing to share. Also, a number of national mail order dealers now trade in back issue CBMs, most notably Bud Plant in Grass Valley, California. Bud's number is 1-800-342-6642. Good Luck!

Letter from New Zealand

I am writing regarding the article by Mr. Severin and Mr. Holt as I have recently read their combined article, "The Shadow...Weird Avenger of Crime," as featured in CBM #28, October 1995.

I am 63 years old and a former radio/broadcasting organizer/writer and recording producer. As a boy in the late '30s and '40s, I grew up in the days of Golden Age radio, Bogart and Bacall movies including Frankenstein/Dracula etc.--all that wonderful nostalgic stuff. I also loved the great swing bands and jazz music of America.

We didn't have the Shadow movie serials or the radio shows, however, about ten years ago I made contact with a gentleman in PA who dealt in old time radio programmes on audio tapes. Since then, I have purchased a number of excellent American broadcasts, including The Shadow, Green Hornet, Lights Out, Inner Sanctum, Escape, Suspense, Jack Benny Show, Bob Hope, Spike Jones, plus the wonderful adventures by Morse, featuring a very young Tony Randall entitled "Temple of Vampires."

I still enjoy this old material recorded in the late '30s and '40s, and from time to time, listen to it again. It was all good fun before TV took over I guess. At least one could use one's imagination to the fullest.

Anyway, I want Mr. Severin and Mr. Holt to know how much I enjoyed their Shadow story and pictures, it was great to read just how the publishers of those old pulps began with the Shadow and the radio version. In fact, I've re-read your article about four times now I think!

I am also very interested in the authors and artists of various comics ie. Superman, Fu Manchu etc. I have recently bought a black and white reprint by Sax Rohmer, with illustrations by Leo O'Mealia entitled, Fu Manchu "The Zayat Kiss" and "The Severed Fingers." Great stuff, a wonderful old style comic book printed by Malibu Graphics, California. Unfortunately, this type of publication is extremely hard to find here. The pen and ink sketches are superb, like most comics, although I guess some aren't!

Those Golden Age villains were great in Dick Tracy/Superman/Batman. Do any of your readers know if it is possible to get reprints of say, the first Shadow magazine pulp? or the first Superman/Batman/Flash/Plastic Man comics or is this now completely impossible? I thought perhaps these may have *(Continued on page 10)*

JHV
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Joel Thingvall, gen. mgr.

been published again at some time for "new" readers. I would appreciate it very much if anyone could let me know about this query I have via CBM. From time to time, I buy certain comics or stories concerning the Golden Age; be it comics, stories, nostalgic and classic movies.

Keep up the good work gentleman, and kind regards from down under–New Zealand. I trust this letter reaches you folks okay.

P.S. I'm retired these days and pass the time listening to such old radio programmes, going to movies and concerts, and lazing in my deck chair with either a cold beer or a G&T. I worked in Toronto for CBC Radio from '58 until '63… and found the snow and ice too cold!

Hugh MacDonald, Lower Hutt, New Zealand

The early DC heroes are gettable via the Famous First Edition series. These can be purchased from many of the mail order dealers advertising this issue. As for a reprint of the first Shadow pulp magazine, I've never seen one but perhaps one of our CBM readers has and will let us both know. Thanks for writing, Hugh.

Letter from Uruguay

It's not been long since I first knew your wonderful magazine, but the scarce number of issues I could get my eyes on convinced me you're turning out the best magazine dedicated to comic book lore and comicollectors that I have ever seen.

The trouble is the magazine is not received in these Southern coasts. We're 3rd worlders still in our country, even if we may boast of a rather high cultural level, despite our tiny size among South American nations. I've been a dedicated collector of comics since my youth, which unfortunately coincided with the Comic Debacle of the late '50s. As an avid American (translated-into-Spanish) comic book eater, I felt my whole world was brutally torn off when I finally realized my beloved comics of the early fifties were definitely gone. I instinctively felt the incidence of TV in that process, and, unaware yet of the infamous Code, understood nonetheless that there was some kind of censoring operating.

Grown older, I began to write articles and fiction (I was destined to persist into it for over 35 years, until now); at the same time, I tried by all means to get back my old magazines, which (I still can't say how it happened) were all lost… I began to search everywhere for old comic books, and in those times (early sixties), one could find them in old book stores, and even from the companies which had published them. I was fortunate enough to get a complete run of Cuentos de Brujas and Misterious del Gato Negro (Mexican versions of the Harvey horror stuff); also, for sheer luck, a lot of reprints of the EC line, which I had never known in their original appearance.

One of my fondest dreams, since then, was to get as much EC stuff as I could lay my hands on, and it was finally fulfilled by the reprints Mr. Cochran and Gemstone are turning out. I can only thank them as loud as one can, through ordinary mail…

The tribute to Wallace Wood in your ish #44 really touched and moved me to write immediately. I'd like to see something similar about Bob Powell, one of my favorites of whom I never saw a photo. (I wrote an article on him, with the title The Faceless Genius, just because of it… I strongly believe he's been unfairly underrated, not by readers, but by comic historians.)

The CBM issues I could get came through a fellow who is charging me $20 each for them. Couldn't we agree on a little less expensive price? My funds are limited, even if my avidity is not… I'm particularly interested in your issues #22, 26, 37, 38, 42 and 43, which I saw at your site in the Web. One thing: the E-mail you give in your mag doesn't seem to work. I reached your site by simply spelling the complete name of your magazine in one of the searchers, Webcrawler. Anyway, I've got you bookmarked now, so I won't get lost.

Receive my sincere congratulations and my warmest applause for your good work. Just in case you may be interested, one of my articles, about Bob Kane, has reached the Web (only it's written in Spanish, sorry). The address is http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/jornada/1997/ene97/970126/sem-federici.html All best,

Carlos M. Federici, Uruguay, South America

What a treat to get your letter, Carlos. It's exciting to think CBM is read in South America!

Lou Fine's Greatest Fan!

Jon Berk says he is Lou Fine's greatest fan in a recent CBM article (#39). I would like to claim that distinction. About twenty-four years ago I met the man who co-authored "The Who's Who of American Comic Books," Hames Ware (who lives right here in Little Rock), and also saw my very first Lou Fine comic cover.

Hames was a guest at *(Continued on page 12)*

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a friend's home that day. My friend had just bought a Hit Comics and a Smash Comics collection. Basically it was Hit #1-13, 15-16, 18, 20 and 21, and Smash #14-24, 26-29 and 32. We all looked through these books and I was blown away. I have never seen covers as beautiful as these, and right then and there I vowed to collect these books. Hames told me this man's name was Lou Fine and that he had just recently passed away.

Also at that time, Hames showed me what a "sneak" is. It seems S. M. Iger didn't want his artists to get credit for their work because he was afraid they would want more money. Therefore, he created a slew of "pen names" for his artists. To get around this, sometimes they would put their signatures in strange places. He said I was to look for this and I would then be able to identify who that artist was in the future.

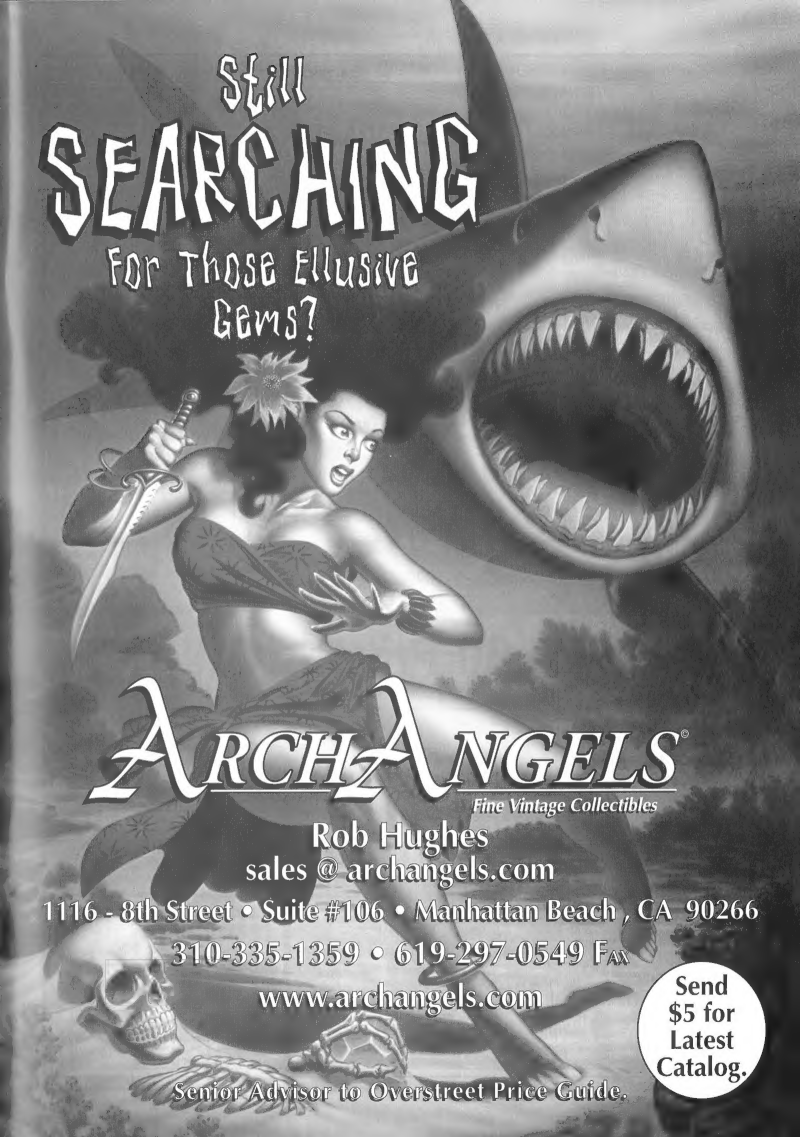
Of course I had no idea how many covers Lou Fine did or which ones they were. The Overstreet Price Guide was in its infancy and I knew no other collectors who had these books. Hames was the only one who could help.

A collector/dealer friend in New York, and I, had been corresponding through the mail for 2 or 3 years. We had a good working relationship. I had no idea he had been collecting Quality Comics for over thirty years and was ready to sell his collection. He had near complete runs of Hit #1-20, Smash #3-30, National #1-26, Feature #3-66, Crack #2-19, Military #1-18, and Police #2-20. Over the next ten years I traded, bought and in general, absorbed his collection and in some instances was able to fill in his gaps.

The man even had 2 copies of Hit #17 for which my friend traded me Jumbo #4, Lou Fine's first art, and Wonderworld #8. Another friend in Texas has about 8 Lou Fine covers. I traded him my Amazing Mystery Funnies #1 for those.

Richard O'Brien published an excellent work on comics in 1980 which features many Fine covers. He also would trade and sell these books. I got several from him including Jumbo #12, Mystery Men #8 and 9, and many Centaur books. The Fiction House books had magnificent house ads which showed the total output for the month other than the book you were holding. This was a great source to view these Lou Fine covers. Fox Publications also did this, which was a big help as well.

At this point I need only three Lou Fine covers to have the entire collection. I need Mystery Men #1, Jumbo #9 and *(Continued on page 15)*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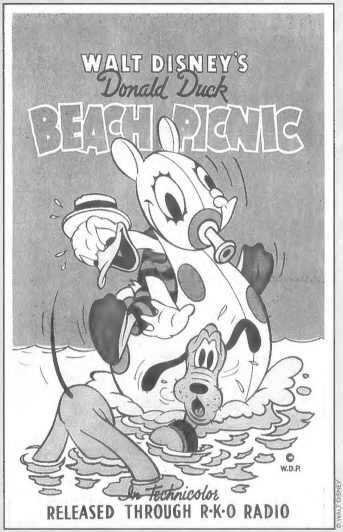

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HERE

Wonderworld #3. In amassing these books I had to learn who else drew for these companies by patching up the "sneaks" with the rightful artist.

I also discovered that many of the best artists at Quality started at "lowly" Centaur Comics. Eisner, Jack Cole, and Paul Gustavson etc. were all in books I collected when they were worth practically nothing at that time.

I honestly believe I can identify almost all Quality artists from Hames' research and notes and my own near complete Quality/Centaur/Fox/Fiction House runs from 1936-43.

As I collected, I noticed that some of the covers that were sold as "Lou Fine" were vastly different in style, content, perspective, inking and in general looked like the work of many people. My thoughts were that some of these books could not be by the same person. Some looked like they had action on several different levels, but had faces like Lou Fine style.

I went to the source most likely to know–Will Eisner. Mr. Eisner told me that he had been the art director of a shop with S. M. Iger. Eisner had been responsible for creating characters, doing the covers and handling the staff of the entire output of Fox/Fiction House/Quality comics. The early Fiction House books clearly identify Eisner as the art director for their company. Eisner would lay out a cover in pencil and hand it to Lou Fine to finish. Fine would then sometimes merely ink the cover himself. Other times he would use Eisner's thumb nail sketch as a guide and finish the cover to his own liking. Other times he would draw a new cover from Eisner's original idea, and still other times Fine would venture on his own using the characters provided; such as Samson, Neon, or the Red Bee. Still other times Eisner would finish the cover himself if Fine were preoccupied and still other times such as Fight #1 and Jungle #1, would have Eisner's faces and perspective, but Lou Fine finishes and touches.

I bought several books, like Wonderworld #13 as "Fine," only to find that it is Joe Simon, or traded big dollar comics for Weird #1 only to find it is by George Tuska. Overcoming tremendous hardships led me to over-achieve and I believe I have enough of the pieces of the puzzle to list all Lou Fine covers. I believe I can account for the gap between the Fox/Fiction House books and Quality Comics also. Eisner quit Iger's shop and took Lou Fine, Bob Powell and Chuck Mazoujian with him. They produced their own studio for E. M. "Buzy" *(Continued on page 72)*

LOU FINE CHECKLIST

Wonder Comics #2
Jumbo #8 is Eisner (not Fine)
Wonderworld #3 (with Eisner)
Wonderworld #4
Jumbo #9 (with Eisner)
Mystery Men #1
Wonderworld #5
Mystery Men #2
Wonderworld #6
Jumbo #10
Mystery Men #3
Wonderworld #7 (with Eisner)
Mystery Men #4
Wonderworld #8
Jumbo #11 (with Eisner)
Mystery Men #5
Blue Beetle #1
Fantastic #1
Wonderworld #9 (with Eisner)
Mystery Men #6 (George Tuska not Fine) compare to Weird #1
Fantastic #2
Planet #1 (with Eisner)
Jungle #1 (with Eisner)
Fight #1 (with Eisner)
Wonderworld #10
Fantastic #3 (with Eisner)
Planet #2 (Eisner, not Lou Fine)
Science #1 (one of the best)
Wonderworld #11
Mystery Men #8 (with Eisner)
Fantastic #4
Science #2
Wonderworld #12
Mystery Men #9 (with Eisner)
Fantastic #5?
Fight #4
Science #3 (unknown) certainly not Eisner or Fine
Weird #1 (Tuska)
Hit #1 (with Eisner)
National #1
Hit #2 (with Eisner)
National #2 (with Eisner)
Hit #3
National #3
Hit #4
National #4
Hit #5 (with Eisner) my personal favorite
National #5
Hit #6 (with Eisner)
National #6
Hit #7 (with Eisner)
National #7 (with Eisner)
Hit #8
National 38
Hit #9 (with Eisner)
National #9–incredible detail
Hit #10
National #10
Hit #11
National #11 (with Eisner)
Hit #12
National #12
Hit #13
National #13
Uncle Sam #1 is Kotzky not Fine
Hit #14
National #14
Hit #15 (Gill Fox)
National #15 (Gill Fox)
Hit #16 is Fujitani
National #16
Hit #17 (with Eisner) one of the best
National #17 is Fujitani (compare to Hit #2)
Uncle Sam #2 is Myron Strauss
National #21 the figure of Uncle Sam is Lou Fine, the rest has been finished by Fujitani–probably something left unfinished by Fine
Flame #1–The Flame figure is from Wonderworld #7, the rest is new art by Charles Sultan

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Bruno Premiani Splash
Doom Patrol #101, pg.1

Frank Frazetta illustration from
unpublished EC Picto-Fiction

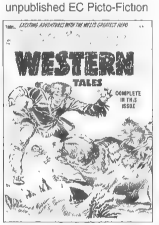
Carmine Infantino Splash
Flash #138, pg. 1

Frank Frazetta illustration from
unpublished EC Picto-Fiction

Gil Kane & Murphy Anderson
Cover, Green Lantern #32

Jack Kirby Splash
Tales Of Suspense #86

Jack Kirby Cover
Fantastic Four Annual #4



Jack Kirby Cover
Western Tales #31

Al Williamson & Reed Crandall
5 pg story, Alarming Tales #2

Berni Wrightson
Eerie #61 (13x18)

Alex Schomburg Cover
All New #11

Frank Frazetta Published
Doubleday Illustration (14x17)

We will be displaying an extensive selection of works by most of the artists listed below...and many, many more!
We are very interested in comic book art, strip art and illustrative art by: N. Adams, Kirby, Eisner, Ditko, McFarlane, Frazetta, Crandall, Williamson, Schulz, Raymond Foster, Kurtzman, Kubert, Smith, Jones, Wrightson, Jim Lee, Adam Hughes, Herriman, Segar, Rockwell, Kaluta, EC artists, Crumb, Stevens, Fine, Swan, Kane, Toth and everybody else!

Three Detectives

By Pat S. Calhoun

David McKay began publishing their *Feature Books* in 1937; it was the first comic book series to devote complete issues to different individual characters. They specialized in reprinting the popular newspaper strips of the King Features Syndicate, including, Blondie, Popeye, Prince Valiant, and the Phantom. In the postwar years–when the more mature comics audience was clamoring for crime–the *Feature Books* title, in a four-issue span, offered four-color exploits of three of the greatest 20th-century fictional detectives. One was from a book that helped define the hard-boiled genre, two adapted novels from a wildly popular series about a crime-fighting lawyer, and the other reprinted the best comic strip detective since Dick Tracy. Sam Spade, Perry Mason, and Rip Kirby appearing one after the other marked a high point in comic book treatments of the mystery genre.

Feature Book #48, The Maltese Falcon (1946), adapted Dashiell Hammett's seminal 1929 novel that introduced San Francisco's most famous private eye, Sam Spade. Spade served as a blueprint for the new kind of detective–terse and tough as opposed to the preceding P.I.s who were verbose and Victorian and prattled endlessly about deduction. Sam Spade appeared only in the one novel, but his fame was enhanced by Humphrey Bogart's portrayal of the character in John Huston's fabulous 1941 film of *The Maltese Falcon*–where the whole cast was superlative and helped achieve the most faithful translation of book into movie of all time.

The comic book version is faithful to both, although the characters aren't rendered to look like their Hollywood counterparts. But artist Rodlow Willard came up with a "cast" as perfect as Huston's, and they express themselves in a style that's realistic and cartoony at the same time. The story begins as a beautiful woman hires Spade's detective agency to shadow her boyfriend. Sam's partner takes the assignment and gets murdered, and Spade soon discovers that the woman is part of a gang of international crooks who have stolen but lost possession of an incredibly valuable statue of a falcon–cast in gold and studded with jewels.

Hoping to uncover his partner's killer, drawn by his client's charms, and intrigued by the treasure hunt for the elusive falcon, Spade aids in the search as the thieves bicker and scheme. Of course the chase leads somewhere that turns the conventions of 1920s melodrama upside down and sets the stage for a new generation of gumshoes. And the comic book loses none of the impact or implications of Hammett's or Huston's versions in the closing chapters. Plus–the comic does provide one bonus that the other two lack–Willard's masterful illuminated chapter headings.

Feature Book #50, The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe, is the second of a couple of issues that each adapted one of Erle Stanley Gardner's 77 Perry Mason mysteries. The series proved immensely popular, starting with the first novel–from 1933. The Shoplifter's Shoe first appeared in 1938, and it is a satisfying example of that combination of perplexing puzzle, clear characters, and agreeable humanism that was Gardner's trademark through the four decades of his writing career. The comic came out in 1947, "a picturization of a bestseller", handsomely illustrated by veteran artist Paul Norris (famed for his work on the early Golden Age Aquaman in *More Fun Comics*).

The story starts simply enough as Perry and secretary Della Street, dash in out of the rain for tea at a restaurant in a department store. When they see two women, one older and one younger, at a table get approached by the store detective–who accuses the older one of shoplifting–Mason intervenes on her behalf. The young woman makes out a check for the items in question, and, after they leave, Perry and Della are left with the minor and unsolvable (based on what they know now) mystery of why a nice seemingly well-to-do woman would be a shoplifter.

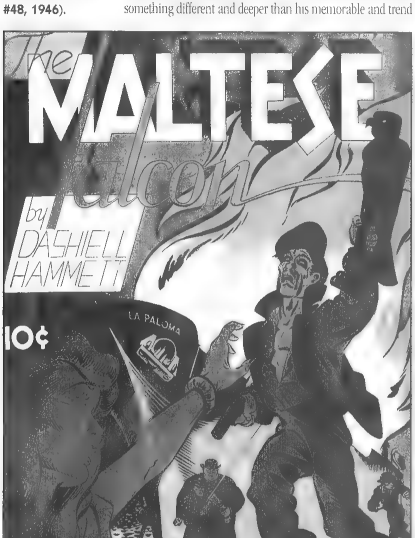
The legendary Paul Norris did the cover of The Case of the Shoplifter's Shoe (Feature Book #50, 1947), using the "open comic book" cover concept.

But the next morning the younger woman shows up at Mason's law office with a story. Her uncle has disappeared on one of his periodic drunken binges and valuable diamonds from his jewelry business are missing from the safe. Then the older woman–her aunt–is knocked down by a car while fleeing from what proves to be the murder scene of the middleman involved with their jewelry company. And the dead man's blood is found on her shoe! How Mason traces out her innocence is a fascinating process that combines plenty of action with old-fashioned "deduction."

The Perry Mason novels are famous for courtroom climaxes that turn on fine points of evidence, and this story has one which the comic book adapts brilliantly, having adroitly juggled all the clues into position for Mason's revelations. This one is complex enough that an aftermath is included where Mason

explains to Della and his clients some of the intricacies of his solution, and it's completely enthralling.

Feature Book #51, Rip Kirby, reprinted the strip that fulfilled creator Alex Raymond's desire–built up during his military service through World War II–to come home and start something different and deeper than his memorable and trend



A.L. COUNTS & DAVID MACKAY

Artist Rodlow Willard's lush and lurid cover for this Hammett classic (Feature Book #48, 1946).

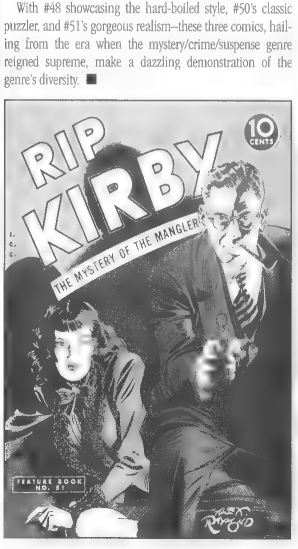
The unsurpassable art of Alex Raymond combined with first-rate stories make Rip Kirby (Feature Book #51, 1948) one of the most elegant comics ever produced!

setting creation of Flash Gordon in the 1930s. Setting the strip in the "real" world of the postwar 1940s did seem to let Raymond flesh out his characters. While Flash Gordon was dominated (however gloriously) by space and other-world scenes, aliens, and futuristic machinery, Rip Kirby was more apt to dwell on the textures of the characters against their everyday backgrounds. Rip Kirby is a well-heeled war hero with a butler and a high-society girlfriend; he fights crime when the spirit moves him or when the case interests him–not to support himself. Setting the strip in the "upper class" world gave Raymond many chances to depict fine fabrics of clothes and furniture as well as swathing them around some smooth-contoured females–always a specialty of the house.

This book contains two stories. The first one is the strip's introductory episode, with Rip just out of the service. It deals with narcotic peddlers who've infiltrated the world of fashion models and photographers. It starts with a lovely model who's gunned down as she rings Rip's doorbell. Rip gets his fiancée, Honey Dorian, a job with the same agency, and the trail of dead bodies and hypodermic needles eventually leads Rip to the head drug dealer. It's the same old story, by and large, but it's transformed by the exquisiteness of Raymond's details and the dead-on looks and mannerisms of the characters and the "swelegantness" of the upper crust atmosphere and–especially–the awesome Honey. There's a scene where the murderer breaks into Honey's apartment and replaces the arcane liquid in one of the bottles on her dressing table with a horribly corrosive acid. When Honey returns and sits there in her negligee dabbing this and that–the suspense is excruciating.

The second yarn has Rip, Honey, and Desmond (his butler–a former safecracker) traveling to a college where Rip is going to give some lectures. But the Dean really wants Rip there to investigate the disappearance of a formula for a deadly bacteriological weapon that an eccentric professor in the Chemistry department has discovered. When several students get poisoned the situation gets more and more desperate, and Rip keeps trying to make the guilty party tip his hand. If not quite as captivating as the first tale it's still solid storytelling and divine drawing.

With #48 showcasing the hard-boiled style, #50's classic puzzler, and #51's gorgeous realism–these three comics, hailing from the era when the mystery/crime/suspense genre reigned supreme, make a dazzling demonstration of the genre's diversity. ■



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750BB	7 ⅜ x 10 ½	Gold Age Comics	12	40	159	70
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1950's DC Anthologies...

The Epitome of Excellence!

By Michelle Nolan

Sorcerer of the Sea threatens the King of the Seas.

"So," more than one collector has asked, "are those early 1950's issues of *Action* really that scarce?" "So," other collectors inquire, "why in the world is it so tough to find some of those early 1950's issues of *Adventure*?"

"So," others wonder, "Superman consistently outsold Batman in the 1950s, yet why do issues of *Detective* seem more common than *Action* or *Adventure*?"

"So," I respond to all three queries, "I wish I knew! Maybe I'll write about it some day."

What day better than today, having done research for the feature on the 1950's Batman in *Detective Comics* elsewhere in this issue.

Action Comics. Adventure Comics. Detective Comics. You've seen them everywhere at the comic shows since the comic-cons started in the 1960s. But you won't see too many of them in any one spot, at least now.

Perhaps you've never stopped to appreciate the remarkable consistency of DC in the 1950s, much less the Golden Age of the 1940s or the Silver Age of the 1960s.

During a period of constant turmoil and considerable change in comic books, these three bellweathers were on the stands every month during the 1950s, as though standing sentinel for those who would tinker with the contents of so many other comics.

And, of course, the lead feature never changed during that decade in these three books... Superman in *Action*, Superboy in *Adventure*, Batman and Robin in *Detective*. Every month, without fail, you could count on your old friends returning in a 12-page adventure (OK, for you nitpickers, there were a few 10-pagers and 13-pagers, but please allow me at least a little poetic license!).

Think about it–4,320 pages (give or take a few) of the adventures of those stalwarts. And that's just in those three monthly titles! The mind boggles. (By the way, I can just hear *World's Finest Comics* fans, wondering why I'm ignoring their favorite title. Have patience–*World's Finest* deserves a column all to itself, for several very good reasons you will learn in a future issue of *CBM*!)

But what has always impressed me is the consistency of the backup features! DC must have been doing something right, or these comics wouldn't have sold so well throughout the decade.

Check out the checklist that accompanies this column–the consistency of the backup features is amazing for the period! As I've written before, continuing character anthologies (as opposed to straight fiction anthologies) were popular in the first 15 years of the existence of comics. But most of them were either going or gone by the end of the 1940s–at least in their original forms–including five of DC's original Big Eight (*More Fun* departed in 1946, *All-American* in 1948, *Flash Comics* in 1949, *Sensation* in 1951, and *Star Spangled* in 1952).

Interestingly, except for the abrupt dropping of *Flash Comics*, DC converted all of these anthologies into different anthology formats–*More Fun* to humor, *All-American* to western, *Sensation* to weird mystery and *Star Spangled* to war. Yet, during this period of dramatic change in the tastes of the editors (and, apparently, the readers), DC never tinkered with the basic format or the lead characters in *Action*, *Adventure* or *Detective*!

In fact, it took a strange late-1954 blip in the page counts (to be detailed a little further along in this column) to shake up the lineups of all three titles–a change that few fans realize even occurred.

Aquaman's "finny" friends (like the octopus above from Adventure #245, Feb 1958) often saved the day. Note the distinctive Ramona Fradon art.

Everyone is familiar with how most comics abandoned the 52-page format in the late 1940s or early 1950s, with some companies dropping it and then briefly returning to it with a few of their most popular titles. Fawcett and Quality come quickly to mind, and Marvel did it too, driving collectors to distraction. Other companies, such as DC, Dell and ACG, hung on longer than most with 52-page issues before going to 36-page issues on a permanent basis.

To the best of my knowledge, however, DC was the only company to take an interim step in the process. Many, if not most, DC titles became 36-pagers by the end of 1951. But for some reason, several of DC's best-selling titles were converted to 44-pagers for a full three years!

These included all three of our old favorites–*Action*, *Adventure* and *Detective*. That meant that while some characters had their page counts cut, none of them had to be dropped during the transition from 52 pages to 44 pages.

So we still had Congo Bill, Tommy Tomorrow and Vigilante to keep Superman company in *Action*; Green Arrow, Aquaman and Johnny Quick to go along with Superboy in *Adventure*; and Roy Raymond, Pow Wow Smith and Robotman to solve mysteries along with Batman in *Detective*.

That means the 44-page 1951-53 issues are virtually as attractive to collectors as the 52-page beauties. It's interesting to note, however, that while all comic book companies, including DC, published cover plugs to note 52-page status in the early 1950s, DC never made any sort of note about its 44-page titles giving the reader more for his or her dime!

The only thing I can figure is that either DC did not want to call attention to the fact that its comics were no longer 52 pages, or DC wasn't sure how long the 44-page situation would last. Just one of the mysteries of the funnybook ages. Maybe Julie Schwartz can clear it up for us this summer in San Diego! (And don't miss Pat Calhoun's incredible Julie Schwartz extravaganza in *CBM* #50!)

The consistency of the three titles, however, was thrown a huge curve when DC finally decided to cut its entire line to 36 pages late in 1954. Comic book economics and the impending arrival of the Comics Code made this one of the most difficult periods in the industry's history, and even mighty DC was affected. The first 36-page issues were dated October, 1954–*Action* #197, *Adventure* #205 and *Detective* #212.

One feature had to be dismissed from each title, but it was-

CBM CHECKLIST

1950's Action Comics (#140-259)

Action Comics Stars:
Superman #140-259
Congo Bill #140-247 (debut in #37; introduction of Janu the Jungle Boy in #191)
Congorilla #248-259 (last in #261)
Tommy Tomorrow #140-196, 199-251 (debut in #127)
Vigilante #140-198 (debut in #42)
Zatara the Magician #141 (debut in #1)
Supergirl #252-259

1950's Action Comics Page Counts:
52 pages #140-161
44 pages #162-196
36 pages #197-259

n't done without considerable confusion in each. One can just imagine the editors tearing their hair out over this, since it meant letting one of their favorite artists know he wasn't going to be getting as much work (or, at least, would be getting different work).

In *Action Comics*, Congo Bill survived without a blip, which surprises me since I always thought this was one of the weakest strips in all of DC Comics, both from the standpoint of story and art. But DC had just begun publishing a short-lived *Congo Bill* title, so the African Ace was never interrupted in *Action* (what would one of my columns be without a truly horrible pun! And, worse yet, I seldom apologize for them!). But not so Vigilante, a strip I have always liked because it's a different sort of costumed hero, being a Western hero set in modern times.

In effect, Vigilante replaced Tommy Tomorrow for two issues, since the Planeteers vanished into the void for issues #197 and 198, while Vigilante was enjoying a delayed ride into the comic book sunset. But Tommy returned in #199, not to be displaced until the arrival of Supergirl with *Action* #252 in 1959.

Incidentally, Joe Kubert drew a few Zatara stories late in the long-running magician's career, including a little-known but nifty tale in *Action* #141 (February 1950) -Zatara's last appearance in the Golden Age.

In *Detective Comics*, Roy Raymond/Impossible but True–the long-running and extremely under-rated TV Detective strip that was beautifully rendered for the better part of a dozen years by Ruben Moreira–missed #212 but otherwise survived unscathed while the short-lived but original Mysto the Magician Detective ran for one final issue in #212. Can you imagine exposing hoaxes for all those issues, as Roy Raymond did from #153-292? That was one heck of an original series!

Detective already had undergone a shakeup after #202, with Robotman joining the long, long, long list of departed superheroes and Pow-Wow Smith trotting over to Western Comics to make room for Mysto (a unique strip for the times that I actually like) and Captain Compass (I never could figure out what DC saw in this one).

Captain Compass, of course, is the long-forgotten strip that was dropped to make room for J'onn J'onzz, The Martian Manhunter, who went on to become one of the best backup characters in DC's history. I am a huge fan of the original series of the Martian Manhunter–Joe Certa's art has a unique feel to it, and most of the stories are nifty examples of how much plot can be packed into only a few pages. (Certa also did Captain Compass, which goes to show how much a character can mean to an artist. Captain Compass is long-forgotten and The Martian Manhunter is fondly remembered.)

I would love to see DC reprint the entire 102-issue epic of J'onn J'onzz as it appeared in *Detective* #225-326 (I didn't care for the character's mid-1960's adventures in *House of Mystery* nearly as much). If you like plot twists and character development, this series is unique in comics history. And how many superheroes can you name who appeared in over 100 consecutive issues without ever getting their own title?

Besides J'onn J'onzz, DC had another such second-banana hero: Johnny Quick! Johnny, unfortunately, wasn't fast enough to avoid being the victim of the 36-page cut in *Adventure Comics* after surviving the superhero purge of the late 1940s. I've always thought it was somewhat puzzling that Johnny Quick survived, but The Flash didn't. Who knows why, other

CBM CHECKLIST

1950's Detective Comics (#155-274)

1950's Detective Comics Stars:

Batman and Robin #155-274

Pow Wow Smith, Indian Detective #155-202 (debut in #151)

Impossible But True #155-200/Ron Raymond TV Detective #201-211, 213-274 (debut in #153, last in #292)

Robotman #156-202 (debut in Star Spangled #7, first in Detective in #138)

Captain Compass #203-205, 207-224

Mysto Magician Detective #203-212

Sierra Smith #206

1950's Detective Comics Page Counts:

52 pages #155-176

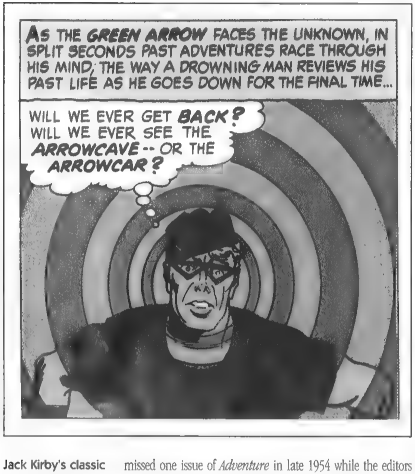
44 pages #177-211

36 pages #212-274

Gorgeous Frazetta splash panel from "Knight of the Future!" originally published in Adventure Comics #159 (Dec 1950). For three decades, Adventure Comics containing Frazetta Shining Knight stories have been in high demand by both 1950's DC fans and Frazetta art collectors.

than one was the flagship character of a title and the other was a career-long backup?

At any rate, Johnny Quick, Aquaman, and Green Arrow each


AS THE GREEN ARROW FACES THE UNKNOWN, IN SPLIT SECONDS PAST ADVENTURES RACE THROUGH HIS MIND; THE WAY A DROWNING MAN REVIEWS HIS PAST LIFE AS HE GOES DOWN FOR THE FINAL TIME...
WILL WE EVER GET BACK? WILL WE EVER SEE THE ARROWCAVE -- OR THE ARROWCAR?
DC ART, CHARACTERS & COVERS © 1997 DC

Jack Kirby's classic Green Arrow faces death in Adventure Comics #253 (Oct 1958).

missed one issue of *Adventure* in late 1954 while the editors made up their minds who would leave permanently. Johnny sat out #205, then had two more adventures before leaving for good while becoming one of the last of the original Golden Age heroes to go. (The only continuous character I can think of who lasted longer was Plastic Man–through 1956–except for DC's Big Three, who never did stop being published.) Green Arrow missed *Adventure* #206 and Aquaman was sidelined for #207.

Even though both Green Arrow and Aquaman in some ways represented the height of absurdity in costume hero stories, I always enjoyed them, if only to see what kind of arrows Green Arrow and Speedy would use or what kind of fishy trick Aquaman would employ. Talk about suspension of disbelief–these characters required you to transport yourself into a whole 'nother dimension!

Incidentally, the 1950-51 issues of *Adventure Comics* did something DC almost never did–they alternated heroes, as can be seen from the listing for Aquaman and The Shining Knight (I always loved that winged horse of his). I suppose they could have continued to alternate them, but the page-count drop to 44 pretty much doomed The Shining Knight, who couldn't be saved even by eight stories rendered by the young Frank Frazetta (the eight Shining Knight stories in the run of *Adventure* #150-163).

I'll bet you never thought I would get around to discussing the relatively scarcity of theses 1950's anthology titles. I mentioned in the "Batman-in-Detective" feature in this issue which issues of *Detective* I consider scarcer than most, led by #191 (January 1953). The others are #157, 169, 176, 185, 196, 200, 203, 220 and 226.

This is all just a hunch, of course, and is in no way validated by anything more than four decades of looking for old funnybooks... so please don't run out and try to corner the market on those books. They're no better or worse than any of the others!

As for *Adventure Comics*, let's see.... While Gerber gives most 1950's issues of *Detective* a "4," he rates most issues of *Adventure* for the same period with "5". I'd have to agree with that, though I have no idea why. He gives a "6" (50 to 200 copies exist) to #150, 151, 152, 157 and 161. I wouldn't necessarily disagree with that, though. Here's my nominations for the toughest 1950's issues of *Adventure* to find: #150, 152, 170, 174, 180, 195, 197, 199, 210 (the first Krypto), 211, 213 and 221.

And in *Action*, Gerber rates all of the early 1950's issues from #151 through 190 with a "6." Some of these do seem pretty scarce for some unaccountable reason–it's hard to believe that *Detective* outsold *Action* by that much–but I've seen enough of them to doubt that they all rate a "6." In general, though, Gerber seems pretty much on the mark with all three titles. My nominations for the scarcest *Action* issues are #141, 155, 158, 178, 181, 191, 194, 207, 213, 216 and 219.

Until next time–don't forget to fill your life with *Action* and *Adventure*... 1950's issues that is! ■

CBM CHECKLIST

1950's Adventure Comics (#148-267)

1950's Adventure Comics Stars:
Superboy #148-267
Green Arrow #148-205, 207-267 (debut in More Fun #73, first in Adventure #103, last in Adventure in #269)
Aquaman #148-152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 167, 168, 170-206, 208-267 (debut in More Fun #73, first in Adventure in #103, last in Adventure in #284)
Johnny Quick #148-204, 206-207 (debut in More Fun #71, first in Adventure in #103)
Shining Knight #148, 150, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 166 (debut in Adventure #66)

1950's Adventure Comics Page Counts:
52 pages #148-168
44 pages #169-204
36 pages #205-267

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.

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Adventure #40	$ 52,000	$75,000	Batman #1	$80,000	$110,000
Detective #27	$150,000	$220,000	Pep Comics #22	$20,000	$28,000
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Detective #140	$8,500	$11,000	Punch Comics #1	$2,000	$2,500
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Batarangs

Whether you call him *the* Batman, the Caped Crusader, the Darknight Detective, the Dark Knight, the Masked Manhunter, one half of the Dynamic Duo, or just plain ol' Batman, he bestrides the comics world like a modern day Colossus. "Batman is one of the five most recognizable characters in the world: Superman, Sherlock Holmes, Mickey Mouse, Batman, and maybe James Bond," notes his creator, Bob Kane. Kane was a young humor cartoonist when he came up with the character that would make him world famous.

His earliest sketches of a man in a bat-winged costume are dated 1934 and were indisputably inspired by Leonardo DaVinci's bat-winged flying machines. The Scarlet Pimpernel's dual identity and daring rescues were also a source of inspiration to the young Kane. Adding to the mix was silent film star Douglas Fairbanks' athletic portrayal of Zorro, who played at being an indolent fop by day, but by night was a dark-cloaked avenger.

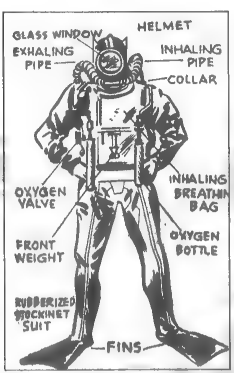
From the pulps, Kane, and early Batman writers like Gardner Fox and Bill Finger, drew on Doc Savage's scientific detection and reliance on futuristic gadgetry. The Shadow's aura of dark mystery and ruthlessness also found their way into the embryonic Batman's personality, as did some of the Shadow's gadgets. In "Batman Meets Dr. Death" *Detective* #29 (July 1939), Batman is shown climbing a wall using suction pads on his hands and knees, a bit swiped cold from a '30's Shadow cover.

Another pulp character who influenced Batman's conception was "the Bat Man," a villainous humanoid bat featured in *The Spider* pulp magazine who resembled the later Man-Bat character. Kane also acknowledged the impression created by *The Bat Whispers* (1930), a remake of a silent mystery which boasted a villain whose bat-head mask created imposing bat-like shadows, and who signaled his next intended victim with a bat-signal thrown on walls. This, in fact, is the direct ancestor of the Bat-signal, now of the most recognizable symbols associated with Batman, but which did not debut until *Detective Comics* #60 (February 1942), and wasn't featured until *Detective* #150 (August 1949).

The Bat Signal itself was actually the focus of an entire story in "Untold Tales of the Bat-Signal" (*Detective* #164, October 1950), with a cover that featured five Bat-signals in the background. That issue detailed in one of the diagrams that were regular features of Batman stories, all of the new Bat-Signal's features; the hand-ground bullet-proof glass lens, the electronized silver reflector, super carbon-arc filaments, and a larger, more powerful lampmobile with a new carriage. The ultimate Bat-Signal was seen on the cover of *Batman* #59 (June/July 1950), illustrating the story, "Batman in the Future." It showed the Bat-Signal being projected from the Earth to the surface of the Moon as Batman and Robin sped by in their bat-winged, bat-headed spacecraft.

Lee Falk's The Phantom, with white slits for eyes, and twin automatics on his hips was a clear inspiration for the Masked Manhunter. In fact, the

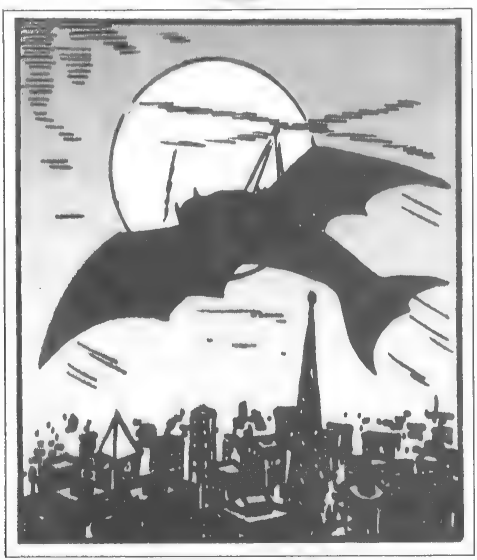
BY S.C. RINGGENBERG



Batman's first "Frog Man" diving suit.

cover of *Detective* #33 (November 1939) shows him leaping down on a pair of gangsters in a roadster with a holstered pistol hanging from his utility belt. Dick Tracy's stylized art and grotesque villains were more wellsprings for Batman's conception from the Sunday funnies of the '30s. While radio's Green Hornet, a wealthy crime-fighter with a high powered auto and an arsenal of matching gear clearly influenced Batman as well. (Of course DC's original Sandman, with his slouch hat and gas gun was an even bigger rip-off of the Green Hornet, down to the coughing sound his victims made: Kaff! Kaff!)

The addition of Robin, the laughing young daredevil in the cheerful red, green and yellow costume, in *Detective* #38 (April 1940), marked the first great turning point in the Batman saga, away from brutal foes, and toward more light-hearted, and gimmicky adventures. In fact, Batman's last Golden Age solo adventure, and one of the last times he used a gun, occurred in the first issue of his own book, in a story that had originally been intended for *Detective* #38. In this story, Batman used the Batplane's machine gun to finish off the last of five rampaging giants created by Dr. Hugo Strange from the unfortunate inhabitants of a mental institution. "Much as I hate to take human life, I'm afraid this time it's necessary!" quoth the Caped Crusader as he riddles the truck carrying one of the giants with bullets. But even that's not enough to finish off the monster, so Batman uses the bat rope to lasso him around the neck and slowly strangles him. "He's probably better off this way," is how Batman rather coldly rationalizes this death. The last monster is finished off in a scene that was ripped right from the ending of King Kong. As the insane giant climbs a skyscraper that's a dead ringer for the Empire State Building, Batman swoops down in the Batplane, machine gun blazing. Unfortunately, Dr. Hugo Strange has outfitted his monster-men with bullet-proof clothing, so the hail of gunfire is to no avail. However, the quick-thinking Dark Knight uses his gas pellets to subdue the monster, who quickly loses consciousness and falls to his death.



Bob Kane's Batgyro seems almost alive silhouetted against an eerie East European nightscape in Detective #31.

Thereafter, Batman not only shunned guns, he seemed to shun the darkness as well. He came out into the limelight to battle clownish foes like the Penguin (inspired, Kane says, by Kool cigarettes' penguin mascot) who had almost as many bird and umbrella-inspired gimmicks as Batman had Bat-Gadgets. And although Batman had technically sworn off firearms after his solo vigilante days, he was still occasionally shown using them, as seen on the cover of *Batman* #15, (February/March, 1943) which shows Batman gleefully firing a Browning water-cooled machine gun as Robin loyally feeds him ammo belts. But I suppose this lapse can be explained by an excess of patriotic fervor; after all, there was a war on!

Writer Bill Finger, Kane's talented but unsung collaborator in the creation of the Caped Crusader, recalled years later in *Steranko's History of Comics*, that initially, Kane, "had an idea for a character called Batman… I went over to Kane's and he had drawn a character who looked very much like Superman with kind of reddish tights… boots, no gloves, no gauntlets… with a small domino mask, swinging on a rope. He had two stiff wings sticking out, looking like bat

wings..." Impressed, Finger was also shrewd enough to realize that the idea needed some refinements. "I got *Webster's Dictionary* down off the shelf and was hoping they would have a drawing of a bat, and sure enough they did. I said, 'Notice the ears, why don't we duplicate the ears?' I suggested he draw what looked like a cowl. He experimented with various cowls. I suggested that he bring the cowl nosepiece down and make him mysterious and not show any eyes at all." And so was born one of the greatest costumed characters that the comics have ever produced.

After Batman's initial conception and almost immediate success, as Bob Kane recalled in his autobiography, "The demand for new material sparked our imaginations and Bill (Finger) and I began to evolve the bat mystique that all later artists and writers would draw upon and embellish. At first Batman wore only gloves but soon Bill suggested that we give him gauntlets. Then I added fins to the gauntlets in keeping with the bat symbolism." The Black Bat, a pulp crime fighter who wore a black mask, scalloped cape and finned gauntlets, was actually published several months after Batman's debut in *Detective* #27 (May 1939), but within a year, Batman's plain gloves had mutated into finned gauntlets, so Batman fans can draw their own conclusions from *that*. However, it's interesting to note that on his second cover appearance (*Detective* #29, July 1939) Batman can be seen leaping into action wearing no gloves, the only time that was ever shown on a cover, so obviously Kane and Finger were still in the process of refining their costumed sleuth's accessories.

"We changed Batman's belt also. At first it was only an ordinary belt with a round buckle. I gave it a square buckle and it became a utility belt for the first time when DC writer Gardner Fox created gas pellets for Batman to carry in a story in which he battles the mad scientist Dr. Death. in *Detective Comics* #29."

"Batman's utility belt may have been inspired by one Doc Savage wore which carried various gadgets like dye to disguise his golden skin, or acid to burn through locks. But Doc's belt was concealed, used infrequently, and never a standard part of his outfit like Batman's." Looked at logically, however, the idea that Kane and Finger lifted from Doc Savage is easily one of the most practical gadgets ever adopted by any superhero. It's saved his hide in countless tight situations with the collection of acids, explosive pills, skeleton keys, cutting torches and other gadgets it contains. Circa 1946, the contents of Batman's utility belt included a two-way radio inside the belt buckle, something that has remained a constant feature of his costume, as well as compartments containing tear gas pellets, a selection of useful chemicals, master keys, and a first-aid kit. The 1950's version, cover-featured in "The Secret of Batman's Utility Belt" *Detective* #185 (July 1952), showed that it contained an infra-red flashlight, a miniature fingerprint kit, a miniature camera, a tiny oxyacetylene torch, smoke capsules, and skeleton keys, as well as the mysterious contents

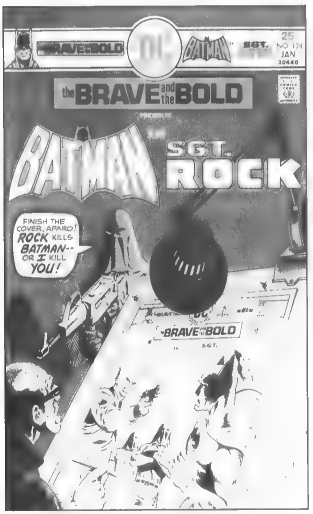
The historic first appearance of the original Bat-Gadgets, the Batplane (Batgyro) and the Batarang... panel 5, page 3, Detective Comics #31 (Sep 1939).

"...Batman flips his Batarang" for the first time in comic book history... panel 4, page 7, Detective #31, in the fifth Batman story and the first of two episodes in which the Caped Crusader battles the Master of Crime known as THE MONK!

Continued on page 60

APARO ROCKS!

Jim Aparo's Batman, Aquaman, Phantom Stranger and Spectre have been acclaimed as some of the greatest comic art of the Bronze Age! —By Bob Brodsky



Brave & Bold #124 (Jan 1976) features Batman and Sgt. Rock in "Small War of the Super Rifles." Note Aparo self-portrait on cover and page 6 (opposite).

Grant is my 15 year-old comic book buddy; I'm 38, so you know that Grant and I don't agree on much. However, Grant loves Jim Aparo's work just as I did at his age–and still do today.

Surf the World Wide Web and you'll see Grant is not alone. Generation X and Y fans with net names like "Buried Alien" and "Sharpshooter" have posted their convictions all over cyberspace: "Jim is the man for illustrating Batman…" or, more to the point, "Aparo Rocks!"

Jim Aparo has been taken for granted over the years. He has stayed in comics and has spent 30 years at DC doing excellent, consistent work. Aparo's touch extends from his mid-1960's work at Charlton to today's comic book rack. His influence on generations of comic book artists as well as the enjoyment he has given legions of comic book fans is beyond calculation.

If Aparo had ever worked at Marvel, Stan Lee would have nicknamed him "Gentleman Jim" and Lee would have, for once, been guilty of understatement. Jim Aparo represents the best kind of comic book professional; he's talented and

AT THIS VERY MOMENT, IN THE QUIET CONNECTICUT STUDIO OF JIM APARO, FAMED ARTIST...
ANOTHER PAGE... GUESS I'LL TAKE A BREAK! THESE BRAVE AND BOLD SCRIPTS ARE TOUGHIES!
BUT WHEN THE GIFTED DELINEATOR OF A THOUSAND-AND-ONE ADVENTURES RETURNS TO HIS DRAWING BOARD...
WHAT'S THAT CRAZY WRITER DONE NOW? HE'S GOT BATMAN AND SGT. ROCK BEING KILLED IN THE NEXT PANEL...
I'LL FIX THAT--!
WHO ARE YOU? HOW'D YOU GET IN--?
SKIP THE QUESTIONS! DRAW WHAT IT SAYS!
GOOD LORD! YOU... YOU'RE SOME OF THE GANG...FROM THE STORY!! YOU CHANGED THE SCRIPT WHILE I WAS OUT OF THE ROOM!
YEAH, BRIGHT BOY! NOW... DRAW!
HIS MIND RACING, HAND TREMBLING, APARO BEGINS TO PENCIL THE NEXT PANEL...
IF I COMPLETE THIS AND THE NEXT PANEL THE WAY THE SCRIPT READS... BATMAN AND ROCK... WILL DIE!
GOT TO DO SOMETHING!
BROKE MY PENCIL--!
SNAP
YOU TWO... MADE ME NERVOUS! I HAVE MORE IN THE STOREROOM!
WE CHECKED! IT'S GOT NO EXIT! OKAY, GET YOURSELF ANOTHER PENCIL... BUT DON'T BREAK IT OR WE'LL BE DOING SOME BREAKING OURSELVES!
PART 2 OF THE MOST DARING AND UNIQUE BRAVE AND BOLD EVER SERVED UP... NEXT!
6

Panels of Spectre, "The Anguish of the Spectre," Adventure Comics #432 (Mar/Apr 1974), page 9

lively with great stories to tell and kind words for others.

Best known for Batman, Aquaman and the Phantom Stranger at DC, Aparo's tight, angular style captures these characters and others at their best. Jim graciously spoke to me from his Connecticut studio, starting with his childhood love for comic books.

"I started reading comic books at the age of eight. I had

scarlet fever and was quarantined in my bed when my dad or mother brought me home a comic book," Aparo remembers. "This comic book had wooden puppet characters, a horse and a kid and maybe another animal, and I was so fascinated that I kept drawing from it. That's really how I got into it. I don't remember the title."

Aparo continues, "My early influences included Milt Caniff and Mac Raboy." The Caniff connection seems obvious, right down to the boxed signature used by both artists. They share a linear style and cinematic sense of story telling.

"Milt Caniff was a great influence on me," Aparo says, "I was a big Caniff fan–Terry and the Pirates, Steve Canyon, Male Call. I was very sad when he passed away."

Raboy taught Aparo the elegance of good clean lines. "Mac Raboy was very Alex Raymond. I thought Captain Marvel, Jr. was a fabulous strip, way ahead of its time. I never met Raboy. I was eight-years-old when I first read him, but his work still looks good today."

"My favorite comic book characters were Superman and Batman," Aparo remembers. "I thought Jerry Robinson did a great job on Batman."

In the early 1950s, Aparo headed for New York City armed with his artist's brushes and strong desire to draw comic books. Surprisingly, every company on the street rejected him. "Back in those days comic books were a closed shop," Aparo remembers. "Maybe I wasn't good enough at the time. I mean the young guys coming up today, man, they can really draw. But I made out."

"Joe Orlando was at EC Comics... they turned me down. I also submitted stuff through the mail and got rejection notices. Many artists have all gone through the same thing."

By the mid-50s, married and soon to be a father, Aparo detoured away from comics out of necessity. "I spent 11 years in commercial advertising before finally breaking into comics in 1966. Dick Giordano was the editor at Charlton Press and I went down to Derby, Connecticut to see him. He liked my samples and offered me a script to work on. I told Dick I had a full-time job and he said I could do it part-time, to get into it. And I did."

"Gradually I did more and more stuff. I ran the gamut: superheroes, westerns, horror and romance–I touched on all those subjects. Finally," Aparo recalls, "Dick said that he wanted me to work full-time. He had enough work for me, and that's when I switched over."

1967 found Aparo's work scattered across the Charlton Line. Like Charlton itself, Aparo's work was eclectic–bending slightly to suit the project at hand. Diffused and plagued by distribution problems, Charlton nevertheless gave Aparo, and other new talents like Denny O'Neil and Pat Boyette, a place to grow into their craft.

"A lot of artists and writers started *Continued on page 64*

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BATMAN © DC COMICS

Some call it 'New York' or 'Manhattan', but to Bob Kane, it's 'Gotham City' and, by any name, it's home. With those words, American Airlines began to explain why they asked Batman creator Bob Kane to "host" a pamphlet called *How Kids Enjoy New York*. It was 1966, and Batman was big. Julie Schwartz had implemented a new look in the comics, Biljo White had a top fanzine with *Batmania* and the Adam West TV series on ABC was riding high in the Neilsens. So it made sense, when an airline decided to promote the Big Apple as a venue for vacationing with the kids, that Batman's creator was asked to participate.

I found out about the pamphlet through a small notice in a Texas newspaper, and sent off for one. It soon arrived, free of charge, and even at the age of 16, I realized I had come across a collectible jewel.

The cover of the brochure features two photos. The larger is a shot of Kane, off stage, pointing with a brush to a painting of Batman and Robin. The painting, reproduced in full color, is a classic shot of Batman and Robin swinging on their silken cords (as usual, showing nothing that the ropes might be attached to), with the Gotham skyline in the background, and a Bat Signal flashing through the sky. The painting must have been fairly recent for 1966, since the emblem on Batman's chest featured the new look yellow circle. Below the main photo, a second photo shows Kane at his drawing board with two other paintings in the background. One of the paintings is a Golden Age-style mood shot of Batman with his cape covering the exposed portion of his face, and a foggy Gotham in the background. The other canvas is a portrait of Batwoman.

The bulk of the interior is text explanations of what to see in New York. But the centerpiece of the brochure is a sixteen-panel story illustrated by Bob Kane. The story centers around two boys who fly to New York on American Airlines, and are met at the airport by Mr. Kane. They fly a helicopter into the city where Bob proceeds to show them the sights. They're impressed by the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building (then, the world's tallest), Chinatown, and the Bronx Zoo.

But, just by chance, the group happens by a mid-town gallery where Bob Kane is having an exhibition. The windows are full of what one of the boys calls "pow" art paintings of Batman. The two paintings shown in the window are drawings of the two paintings shown in the cover photos. Then, the group heads into a room full of drawings and paintings of our heroes along with villains like The Penguin, The Joker, and The Riddler. The room also contains the Batwoman portrait from the cover. As the boys' eyes get wide, Kane says, "Welcome to the Batcave, boys. Ha! Ha! Well not exactly… it's just my studio." In the next panel, Kane is showing them a Batman drawing in progress and says, "This is where I draw Batman and Robin for the comic books."

Then, Kane puts the boys back on the plane headed for home while he waves good-bye and makes a final pitch for American Airlines. The final panel carries the familiar Bob Kane signature block.

The back cover, again in full color, features another shot from the same

Touring Gotham

JUMPING JELLYBEANS! LOOK AT THOSE BATMAN 'POW' ART PAINTINGS!
THAT'S RIGHT! I'M HAVING AN EXHIBITION HERE AT A MID-TOWN GALLERY.

photo session with Kane at the drawing board. We see the same two paintings behind him, but this time, the photo is a slightly different angle and not so tightly cropped. The drawing board clearly shows a near-finished comic page that looks as if it's already inked and lettered. One can only speculate that Kane borrowed the page from DC or from his own collection since he was mainly a penciler at the time. The page is probably a Batman page, but from the size of the photo and the angle of the shot, it's impossible to be certain. It gives the intended impression that Kane did most of the work on Batman's adventures.

It is on this back cover that we learn something about Bat-lore that we never learned in the comics: the two young boys that Kane has toured through Gotham are Greg and Terry–Dick Grayson's two young cousins! Imagine–two young heirs to the Robin mantle who were never used in the comics.

It's impossible to know how many of these brochures might be floating around. The one I own is the only one I've ever seen. As a promotional giveaway, the print run could have been 50,000 or 500,000. Does anyone else have one?

American Airlines wraps it up by expressing the hope that "the information in this booklet will help you plan a family vacation to the great city where our headquarters is located." Since American Airlines has moved to Dallas-Fort Worth, wouldn't it be nice if they hired Bob Kane to conduct a tour of their new headquarters? Who knows… maybe they'd add another interesting Kane/Batman collectible to the list! ■

THIS IS WHERE I DRAW BATMAN AND ROBIN FOR THE COMIC BOOKS.
WE'VE SEEN ALL THE SIGHTS OF THE CITY, BUT THIS IS THE BIGGEST THRILL OF ALL.
CAN WE HAVE AN AUTOGRAPHED DRAWING OF BATMAN AND ROBIN, MR. KANE?

Cover of the scarce American Airlines tourist brochure How Kids Enjoy New York (1966) and three consecutive interior panels.

with Bob Kane

by Lynn Woolley

Batman Collectibles

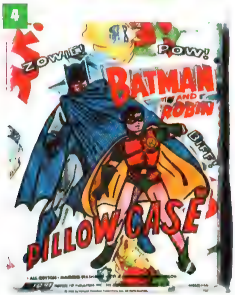
Circa 1966

BY DUANE DIMOCK

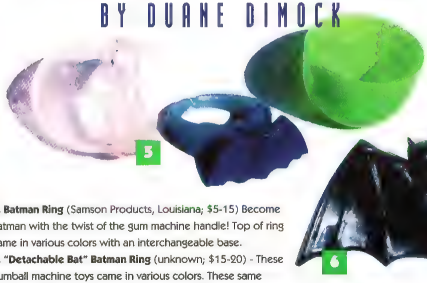
1. Batman hand puppet (Ideal Toy Corp.; $150-200) - Difficult enough to locate by itself, but with the box–a rare find. The box doubled as the Superman puppet box too.

2. Batman Trading Cards (Topps; $800-1,000) - Full boxes of Batman cards are scarce. The red box contained beautiful painted cards that were re-released in 1989. The yellow box contained cards with photos from the TV series.

3. Robin and The Joker rubber figures (unknown; $15-25) - More gumball machine treasures. Are there other figures?



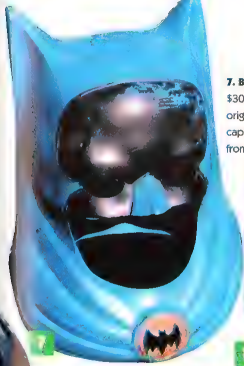
4. Batman & Robin Pillowcase (Perfect Fit Industries, New York; $50-100) "action" instructions for pillow fighting are on the bag.



5. Batman Ring (Samson Products, Louisiana; $5-15) Become Batman with the twist of the gum machine handle! Top of ring came in various colors with an interchangeable base.
6. "Detachable Bat" Batman Ring (unknown; $15-20) - These gumball machine toys came in various colors. These same rings came in Kellogg's cereal… but only in Canada!

QUICK HIDE! STICK HIM WITH THE BATSCOPE
BATMAN
BATSCOPE
BATMAN I HAVE THE EVIL DOER IN THE NEVER-MISS CROSSHAIR SIGHTS OF MY POWERFUL BATSCOPE!

Right on the edge of bedtime–every Wednesday and Thursday night at 7:30 P.M.–I'd be glued to the TV set, hypnotized by every precious minute of of the Batman TV show. In hindsight, it's easy to see what all the Bat-hype was about and why mainstream America went crazy over Bat-stuff! Here are ten of the many weird, wacky, and wonderful Bat-collectibles from the first year of the show (1966) that are now avidly sought after by Bat maniacs! And the good news is… most are pretty inexpensive!



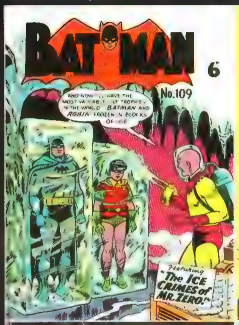
7. Bat Cowl (Ideal Toy Corp.; $30-50) - Another great toy that originally came in a box with a cape–one of the larger Bat-toys from this era.

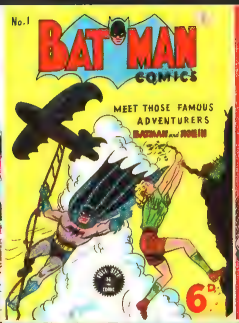
8. Batman Gloves (Wells Lamont Corp., Chicago, Ill; $30-75) - I remember seeing and wanting these gloves from the toy store sooooo bad….

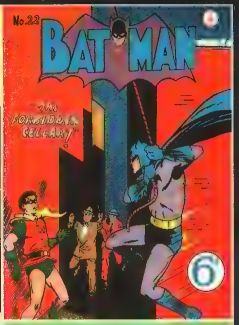
9. Batman Batscope Dartlauncher (Tarco Qualitoy, Sidney A. Tarrson, Chicago, Ill.; $75-100) - What a cool toy! You could look through the crosshairs, line up your target and shoot. The back of the card is even weirder than the toy, and cameos a couple of "unknown" Bat-villains!

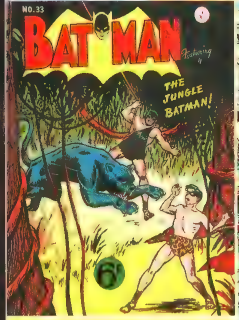
10. Batman & Robin Records (Synthetic Plastics Co.; $15-20) - These four die-cut covered, 45 RPM records have excellent graphics, but the songs… whew… they're so bad they're great!

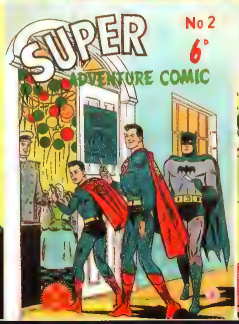
British Editions featuring Batman (See page 6)

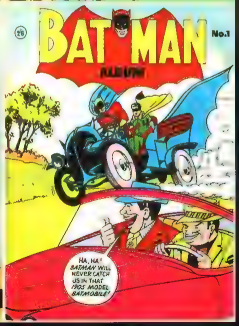

BAT MAN
6
No.109
AND NOW!... HERE THE MOST VARIED LITTLE TROPHIES IN THE WORLD! BATMAN AND ROBIN TAKEN IN BLOCKS OF ICE
Featuring The ICE CRIMES of MR. ZERO!











ALL DC CHARACTERS © 1941 DC

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THE UNKNOWN BATMAN & ROBIN

IN STAR SPANGLED COMICS

by David T. Alexander and Robert Kiefer

When considering the Golden Age appearances of Batman and Robin, most comic book collectors would name *Batman* and *Detective Comics*. The more hard-core could mention their stories in *World's Finest Comics*. Relatively few, besides Batman collecting diehards would realize that in issues #88-94 of the anthology series, *Star Spangled Comics*, Batman teamed up with series regular, Robin, for a short, but very interesting "series-within-a-series."

Beginning with issue #65 (February 1947), Robin was featured in solo adventures in *Star Spangled Comics* with only an occasionally needed cameo appearance by his mentor, Batman. But, in January of 1949, sluggish sales required that a new spark be added to the action in the pages of *Star Spangled*. Comic books were heading toward the end of their second decade of newsstand distribution and innovative (and sometimes desperate) publishers were looking for new concepts to thrill readers of all ages. Industry leader DC decided that adding the other half of the Dynamic Duo to the ailing title's lineup just might ignite the sales of *Star Spangled Comics*. Now both members of fandom's favorite crime fighting team were together for a short but memorable seven issue run.

This little-known subset of one of DC's "Big Eight" anthology titles is an under-appreciated collectible. Especially considering that *Star Spangled's* brightly colored covers and rich story lines are easily equivalent to the Batman and Robin tales in the bi-monthly Batman and monthly *Detective Comics* of the same time period. *Star Spangled Comics* collectors commonly report that these seven issues seem more difficult to locate. Their apparent scarcity, while daunting to some, only provides serious collectors further appreciation for (and incentive to find) the issues in this special subset.

Star Spangled was an anthology title. It gave Robin, a "sidekick" (albeit the best known), a place to show his stuff in solo action. And along with other adventure characters like Captain Compass, Tomahawk, and Merry, the Girl of a Thousand Gimmicks, it delivered more than its fair share of good strips. It also contained short cartoon features by Henry Boltinoff, such as "Bebe" and "Jerry the Jitterbug," as fill-ins. The addition of Batman to the title made it even more interesting, and his presence on and in these remarkable issues must have certainly commanded more attention at the newsstands.

FOLLOW THE RANGER TRAIL WITH TOMAHAWK
No. 94 JULY Ten Cents
Star Spangled
COMICS
AND
VISIT THE MOST AMAZING THEATER OF ALL TIME -

While Batman mainly took first billing on the covers, it was still Robin's turf inside. The splashes boldly displayed "ROBIN-The Boy Wonder." It was, after all, Robin's

series and Batman was only a very welcome "guest" for those seven issues. Batman visited a few more times after the #88-94 run, but these sporadic few appearances weren't quite the same as having a continuous run of stories.

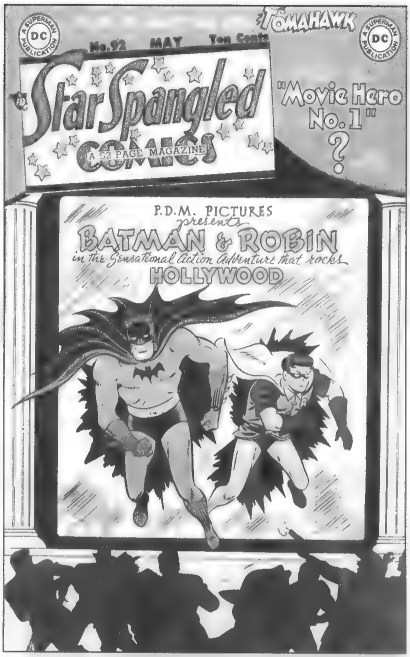
The variety in the stories during the seven issues is an excellent taste of what Batman was all about in the late '40s. We see the unusual, the unexpected, the exciting, and in each story the reader learned a little-known fact or trick that Batman used to defeat his enemies.

Issue #88 is the trendsetter for the series. The cover is in dark blue and sports the headline "The Story of the Year! ROBIN Declares WAR on BATMAN." As a starting point, a battle between Batman and Robin was an excellent choice for a place to begin. The editors were counting on the fact that the excitement generated by pitting the famous pair against one another would be a key strategy in increasing readership as well as captivating current fans. The front cover shows Batman laughing in the foreground as Robin is tied to--and spinning on--a rotating airplane propeller.

In *Star Spangled* #89, the story revolves around Batman's utility belt. It's this crime-fighting tool that is stolen by criminals while Batman is temporarily unconscious. It is then used by the criminal underworld to commit the very crimes that Batman has pledged to stop. An important point for collectors is this issue's diagram showing the various contents of the famous belt's compartments. Shown are (among other things): an infra-red flashlight, a miniature oxy-acetylene torch, a miniature camera, and a glass marble whose mysterious purpose is revealed at the end of the story--it's the marble that Batman uses to catch this story's crooks. The story also reinforces what readers already knew, i.e. the true power behind the belt is Batman's intelligent use of it.

The next issue (#90), features the crime fighting duo traveling out west in the Batplane on Thanksgiving. There they disguise themselves as "Montana" and his kid brother "Maverick" as a ruse to join a ranch that the crooked Little John has taken over. Batman and Robin must investigate and solve the mystery of an empty cylinder, chained to the wrist of a man that Little John killed. They must then prove Little John's guilt. In the middle of this western Bat-saga, Batman plays bronco-buster and does battle with a rattlesnake. With Batman and Robin in such an unlikely environment, a number of interesting plot angles to be explored seem endless.

Star Spangled Comics #91 pits Robin against Batman again in a birthday surprise. The story begins when Dick wonders what to get millionaire Bruce Wayne for his birthday. His decision is to give the present to Bruce's alter-ego, Batman, instead. The "present" is the catalyst for a clash of wits between Batman and Robin. Especially considering that Robin knows enough about Batman to cause problems ordinary criminals would never think of. Who wins? It depends on the reader's point of view. Each gives the other chances that they would never give a real foe. Not only that, during the friendly rivalry Batman stumbles into a real crime and is captured while chasing the Boy Wonder. In this way, neither the fan of Batman nor Robin is disappointed with their hero, and their compatibility and equality is clearly shown.



MOVIE HERO NO. 1
Star Spangled Comics #92 (May 1949, above)
UNDERWORLD PLAYHOUSE
Star Spangled Comics #94 (Jul 1949, left)

Helping detective movie-star Eddie Beaugard is the Dynamic Duo's job in *Star Spangled Comics* #92 (the fifth story of the mini series). The cowardly Eddie witnesses mob boss King Koll murder one of the mobster's men, and, after telling the police what he saw, is visited by two of King Koll's strongmen. Hearing of Beaugard's problems, Batman and Robin take the old classic "bat-faced" Batplane out to lend a hand. The duo then switch places with Eddie and his son to act as decoys, while Eddie waits until trial time. The powerful part of the plot in this issue is Eddie Beaugard's battle against his own fears. With his fear he "feels like a phony" without it, he could become "an even greater hero

RANCHO FEAR! Star Spangled #90 (Mar 1949; above) **BATMAN'S UTILITY BELT?** Star Spangled Comics #89 (Feb 1949; right)

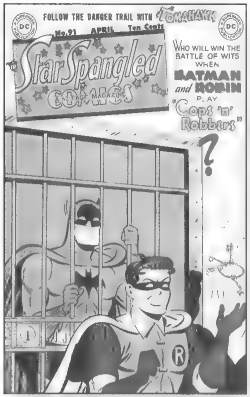
and crime-fighting role-model to his young fans." An amazingly "deep" plot element for a comic story of this era.

Star Spangled Comics #93 is another very scarce issue and has the most exciting and vibrant cover of the subset. A rich blue night sky and a brilliant, full yellow moon is the backdrop for a showdown between Batman and a gun-toting mobster. To further add to the pathos of the cover, the mobster is stepping on Robin's fingers as the Boy Wonder clings to the rung of a ladder bridging two bright red buildings. What Golden Age fan can't love a cover like this?

There is one minor problem with this great cover. Consider the fact that it has absolutely nothing to do with the story inside! But do not judge this book by its cover alone, because inside Batman and Robin battle the Red Mask Gang and a mysterious "Sphinx." When Batman is put out of commission, Robin must escape the gang and capture those he believes have killed his partner. This rather melodramatic story shows Robin recalling (via a short flashback) his fallen partner in scenes with a dinosaur and with the Joker!

The final issue of the *Star Spangled Comics* subset ends the nearly eight-year-old tradition of having stars in the title's cover banner. It is also a DC oddity in that it is missing the border around the "A 52 Page Magazine" slogan (notice in *Gerber* the slogan is in the center of the word "Comics"). In #94, Batman and the Boy Wonder investigate and fight a crime boom in Gotham City. Eventually, they learn from a ticket in captured criminal, "Tumbler's" pocket, that a renegade director is making movies...movies that show criminals winning and both Commissioner Gordon and Robin "dying". Batman disguises himself as "Tumbler" and tries out for the "Crimeway Theater" new movie in which Batman "dies." Getting the lead part (while still making mistakes in the tryout so that he isn't discovered as the real Batman), the Caped Crusader finds that the man behind the crook stirring movies (which are whipping Gotham's criminal element into a veritable "feeding frenzy") is named Mr. Napoleon. Unfortunately, Batman is discovered and the filming of Batman's true death begins. Batman then has to figure out how to signal Robin for help before the director, Len Daniker, yells "ACTION!"

As you can see, the stories described above are all quite interesting. Even though it's the same general plot formula as contemporaneous issues of *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, they are certainly not familiar to many collectors. All are


FOLLOW THE DANGER TRAIL WITH TOMAHAWK
No. 91 APRIL Ten Cents
Star Spangled COMICS
WHO WILL WIN THE BATTLE OF WITS WHEN BATMAN and ROBIN PLAY "Cops 'n' Robbers"

Comparative Prices for Batman, Detective and Star Spangled published January-July 1949

(GD, FN, and NM prices per 1997 Overstreet Annual Price Guide)

	GD	FN	NM
Star Spangled			
#88 (Jan 1949)	$58	$175	$465
#89 (Feb 1949)	$58	$175	$465
#90 (Mar 1949)	$58	$175	$465
#91 (Apr 1949)	$58	$175	$465
#92 (May 1949)	$58	$175	$465
#93 (Jun 1949)	$58	$175	$465
#94 (Jul 1949)	$58	$175	$465
Detective Comics			
#143 (Jan 1949)	$60	$181	$485
#144 (Feb 1949)	$60	$181	$485
#145 (Mar 1949)	$60	$181	$485
#146 (Apr 1949)	$60	$181	$485
#147 (May 1949)	$60	$181	$485
#148 (Jun 1949)	$60	$181	$485
#149 (Jul 1949)	$75	$225	$600
Batman			
#50 (Dec '48/Jan '49)	$80	$240	$635
#51 (Feb/Mar 1949)	$70	$205	$550
#52 (Apr/May 1949)	$85	$255	$675
#53 (Jun/Jul 1949)	$75	$225	$600

drawn well and are an excellent addition to anyone's collection, especially if you are a fan of the Dark Knight's rather scarce post Golden Age stories.

While prices on these issues are slightly less expensive than comparable issues of *Detective Comics*, it should be noted that they are quite a bit less than comparable issues of the bi-monthly *Batman* issues. And when the scarcity of the *Star Spangled* Batman issues are compared with these same two titles, most seasoned collectors feel that the subset is quite a bit harder to find, thus making this an undervalued and highly collectible set of issues. ■

COPS 'N' ROBBERS
Star Spangled #91 (Apr 1949; left)
HOLDING ON FOR DEAR LIFE
Star Spangled #93 (Jun 1949; above)

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The Hunt for the Real Batman in 1950's Detective Comics!

The Unexplored Batman

By Michelle Nolan

The Batman of the 1940s has been well-chronicled, but what about Batman of the 1950s? By comparison, he remains relatively unsung, unknown and under-appreciated. Many fans may not realize this, but there were four distinct types of Batman stories in the 1950's. His run in the 120 monthly issues of 1950s *Detective Comics*–#155 through #274– reflects this very well.

So well, in fact, that one begins to realize why 1950's issues of *Detective* have virtually the same *Overstreet Price Guide* value as 1950's issues of *Batman*, all of which carry three stories of the Dark Knight as compared to only one tale in each issue of *Detective*. I had always thought this was strange until I made a close survey of the *Detective* run from the 1950's and began to realize just how good so many of these classic issues are.

It's obviously impossible to cover much of Batman's history in one article, especially since he appeared in *Batman*, *Detective* and *World's Finest* throughout the 1950s and made cameo appearances in many of the Robin stories in *Star Spangled Comics* #100-130 (the 1950-52 issues, before that anthology title became a war comic).

To cover the 1950's style of Batman as he appeared in his own title, along with *World's Finest* and *Star Spangled*, I will have to wait for future features. In this feature, I'll be concentrating on

Batman's largely unexplored run in *Detective* and how it evolved in the 1950s.

I have listed the title of every story in *Detective* (see charts) for those 120 issues, broken down into the "Four Categories of Batman" over a span of about 1,440 pages! I'm sure some fans will have their own opinions about which story belongs in which category, but that's part of the fun.

The object in breaking down these stories into four categories is to show how much Bat-versatility the reader was rewarded with for his or her *Detective* dime in the 1950s. Batman stories generally packed plenty of variety and plot twists, although many of them bordered on the absurd, which is also a huge part of the fun.

The four categories include The Private Life of Batman (13 stories), Batman vs. Bizarre Costumed Villains (24 stories), Science Fiction, Fantasy and Time Travel (22 stories) and Batman vs. the Underworld (61 stories).

There's no question that the latter category could be broken down into at least a couple of sub-groups, such as Batman vs. Dick Tracy-style villains and Batman gimmick tales, such as "The 100 Batarangs of Batman" in *Detective* #244. There's also no question that some of my placings are arbitrary and up for debate, to say the least.

But the main point I wanted to get across is how much variety the *Detective Comics* of the 1950's contain. The editors obviously tried hard to produce comics that would not seem the same one issue after the next, which is a pretty good trick with superhero anthology titles. Check out other such titles, like Timely's *Marvel Mystery* or Standard's *Exciting Comics* of the 1940's, and the stories seem far more generic.

Of course, part of Batman's versatile run in *Detective* was forced by the creation of the Comics Code, which first put its stamp on an issue of *Detective* with #217 (March, 1955). Most of the relatively gruesome themes and villains of the pre-code days had to be watered down.

Two-Face, for example, was deemed far too gruesome for post-code issues, although editors may have thought he had outlived his economic usefulness, having already made his last *Detective* appearance of the Golden Age in #187 (September, 1952).

Incidentally, *Detective* #187 is often cited as perhaps the most difficult issue of the 1950's run to acquire. But I have seen several copies in person and have seen several others advertised, and the only trouble I had in obtaining one was waiting for a reasonably priced copy in good to very good condition.

Detective #187, by the way, has one of the most unattractive covers of the period, albeit a black cover (which many collectors like). Two-Face is shown from a distance shooting at Batman and Robin while hanging from the hands of a huge yellow clock. In fact, the Two-Face in the story is a hoax, which Batman immediately detects because the criminal has used the wrong side of his face to fake Two-Face!

I couldn't begin to speculate with any real accuracy

The Dynamic Trio... Detective #245 (Jul 1957).

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF BATMAN

#156 (Feb 1950) "The Batmobile of 1950"
#158 (Apr 1950) "The Thousand and One Trophies of Batman"
#164 (Oct 1950) "Untold Tales of the Bat Signal"
#165 (Nov 1950) "The Strange Costumes of Batman"
#185 (Jul 1952) "The Secret of Batman's Utility Belt"
#190 (Dec 1952) "How to Be The Batman"
#195 (May 1953) "The Original Batman"
#226 (Dec 1955) "When Batman Was Robin"
#231 (May 1956) "Batman, Junior"
#233 (Jul 1956) "The Batwoman"
#235 (Sep 1956) "The First Batman"
#237 (Nov 1956) "The Search for a New Robin"
#265 (Mar 1959) "Batman's First Case"

which issues of *Detective* are the most difficult to obtain. It's hard to believe that any 1950's comic featuring Batman or Superman is truly scarce, much less rare, since these were the ultimate adventure character icons of the period (with the possible exception of the likes of Tarzan and Roy Rogers, which also sold very well and thus are relatively common today, even more so than titles starring Batman or Superman).

However, I would nominate one issue of *Detective* as being uncommon: Issue #191 (January 1953), which features a hooded, robed villain who passes himself off as a bounty hunter. It's fascinating to note one of the few mistakes made by normally polished DC Comics: The character is called "The Exterminator" on the cover but "The Executioner" throughout the story. Believe me, DC editors rarely made that kind of mistake.

At any rate, I've seen only three or four copies of *Detective* #191, including the one in my collection… and it wasn't easy to find! It, too, features a nice black cover. I can't help but wonder if the circulation of this issue was somehow limited, though that seems like far-out speculation. I doubt if the error in the villain's name would have been enough to force DC to recall the issue.

The *Gerber Photo-Journal* shows the issues of *Detective* through #254 along with a few later ones, and lists #201-224 as "5s" and the rest of the 1950's issues as "4s". That could well be, but I believe a few issues along the way are fairly tough to acquire besides #191 and #187. These include issues #157, 169, 176, 185, 196, 200, 203, 220, and 226.

I realize those numbers are meaningless for many readers, but I frequently get requests to evaluate relative scarcity while discussing comics. So, for some readers, this will be a meaningful statement, or at least one they can agree or disagree with.

Thanks to data supplied by Jon Ingersoll of Yale University (a noted DC indexer) and information I have gleaned from my own collection, I've compiled what I believe is at least a near-complete list of all of the 1950's *Detective* reprints of Batman stories. As you can see, only 34 of the 120 stories have been reprinted (a few of those more than once). I believe that the 1950-53 Batman period of *Detective* has been one of the most overlooked in all of comics, especially considering the popularity and significance of the character. Only 9 of those 48 stories have been reprinted in any form. And of those nine stories, the only one reprinted in the past 10 years was the Joker origin story in #168 (February 1951), which most recently appeared in the book *The Greatest Joker Stories Ever Told*.

Read over the titles of these stories and see if they don't intrigue you. I guess what I like about them the most is that they fall into the two categories I enjoy best–"The Private Life of Batman" and "Batman vs. The Underworld". Yet even their reprint sources have become pricey– the first seven *Batman Annuals* from 1961-64 are valued from $60 to $12 in the 1997 *Overstreet Price Guide* in "good" condition.

In other words, these stories are virtually unobtainable (except on Microfiche) if you can't pick up the originals. That's a shame, because with all due respect to the pre-war and World War II material printed in the *Batman Archives* series, much of the material in those stories consists primarily of raw energy compared to the much more polished, yet still largely noir-filled tales of the early 1950's. The best reprint project I can think of would be the Batman stories from *Detective* #155-216 (all the pre-code issues of the 1950s).

Older collectors can recall with enthusiasm those seven *Batman Annuals* of more than three decades ago (can it really be that long?). Of course, our enthusiasm was heightened simply because, until Batman's "New Look" created by Julie Schwartz in mid-1964, the

Batman of the 1960's became more and more like a member of the Challengers of the Unknown and less and less like the Dark Knight Detective. It was truly exciting to see Batman portrayed in *Annual* #1 in stories like "Untold Tales of the Bat Signal" (#164), "The Strange Costumes of Batman" (#165) and "How To Be The Batman" (#190).

Even though there was a fairly heavy emphasis on Batman vs. costumed villains–never my favorite type of story, except for the Two-Face and Catwoman adventures– the nice thing is that these villains were not over used, not even The Joker. Did you know that the Clown Prince of Crime made ONLY THREE appearances in the *Detective* of the 1950's? And the Penguin? He appeared only once in that 10-year run of *Detective*.

None of the villains– costumed or non-costumed–appeared more than twice in those 120 issues, except for the three appearances of The Joker. That adds wonderfully to the variety of the series, which is one of its best qualities. However, I do wish The Catwoman had appeared in more stories than merely in #203 and #211.

Other than the science fiction stories–many of which are simply bad Batman or bad for Batman, however you want to think of them–Batman probably hit his low point of the 1950's in the story "The Fox, The Shark and The Vulture" in #253 (March 1958). This is just an awful story, the type of which makes many folks laugh out loud with its ridiculous imagery.

On the other hand, I loved the introduction of Batwoman, whose only two *Detective* appearances of the 1950's were in #233 (July, 1956) and in #249 (November, 1957). The Batwoman motorcycle cover to #233 is sheer magic, and the cover to #249 also dramatically pulls the reader into the story when Batwoman tries to restrain Robin as Bruce Wayne is led off to the electric chair. As impractical and in reality as silly as it was, The Batwoman's colorful costume was a kick, even more than The Catwoman's outfit.

There are also three wonderful stories with one-shot guest superhero creations, previous to their resurgence when the Silver Age began in earnest in the early 1960s. These a r e

One of the most bizarre versions of the Batmobile (looking like a cross between a Model-T and a hotrod) was seen by readers on the cover of **Detective Comics** #219 (May 1955).

1950's Batman Story Reprints From Detective Comics

(With thanks to Jon Ingersoli)
#156 reprinted in 100-Pager Super Spectacular #14
#158 reprinted in Batman #256
#164 reprinted in Batman Annual #1
#165 reprinted in Batman Annual #1 and Batman #259
#168 reprinted in Greatest Joker Stories Ever Told and Batman from the '30s to the '70s
#184 reprinted in Batman Annual #3
#190 reprinted in Batman Annual #1
#198 reprinted in Batman Annual #2
#203 reprinted in Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told, Volume II
#205 reprinted in Batman Annual #1 & Batman from the '30s to the '70s
#207 reprinted in Batman Annual #2
#209 reprinted in 80-Page Giant #5
#211 reprinted in Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told
#213 reprinted in Batman Annual #3
#215 reprinted in World's Finest #180
#217 reprinted in Batman Annual #3
#221 reprinted in Batman Annual #1
#222 reprinted in Batman #259
#225 reprinted in Silver Age Classics (reprints entire issue)
#226 reprinted in Batman Annual #2
#230 reprinted in Batman Annual #3
#233 reprinted in Batman Annual #4 and Batman from the '30s to the '70s
#235 reprinted in Batman Annual #4; Best of DC Digest #2; Batman #255; and Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told
#243 reprinted in Batman Annual #5
#246 reprinted in Batman Annual #6 and Best of DC Digest #2
#247 reprinted in Batman Annual #4
#249 reprinted in Batman Annual #7
#252 reprinted in Batman Annual #6
#255 reprinted in Batman Annual #6
#256 reprinted in 80-Page Giant #12
#267 reprinted in Batman Annual #7
#268 reprinted in Batman Annual #5

"The Batmen of All Nations" in #215 (January, 1955), "The Dynamic Trio" in #245 (July, 1957) and "The Man Who Ended Batman's Career" in #247 (September, 1957).

"The Batmen of All Nations" (reprinted in *World's Finest* #180) starred creations such as The Gaucho of Argentina, The Legionary of Italy, The Musketeer of France, The Ranger of Australia, and The Knight and The Squire of England (I especially like that last one!). Considering this was published during the nadir of the superhero, I thought it was outstandingly original and refreshing.

The temporary characters created for the other two stories were Mysteryman for #245 and Starman for #247 (Starman was Batman himself). DC made up its share of one-shot, mythical and hoax costumed heroes and villains, but I believe this "Starman" is the only one that bears of the name of an actual DC hero. The original Starman, however, had not appeared in more than 11 years by the time *Detective* #247 hit the stands, so I doubt that DC editors were particularly concerned over the name.

One of the best titles for a Batman story, "Around the World in Eight Days" in #248 (October, 1957), is a nice takeoff on the most popular movie of that period.

Three "Private Life" stories were particularly touching–"The First Batman" in #235 (September, 1956), "The Search for a New Robin" in #237 (November, 1956) and "Batman's First Case" in #265 (March 1959).

The story in #235 ties with the Batwoman debut story in #233 as my all-time favorite Batman tale, revealing as #235 does, how Batman's father also once wore an old-fashioned Batman costume. It's a touching tale, one that packs a real emotional wallop. I read it over and over as a child, wondering what it must have been like for Batman to endure what he did.

Interplanetary intrigue is the cover "hook" of Detective #256 (Jun 1958).

Finally, for the worst but maybe the most entertaining bit of dialogue–in an otherwise decent story about a circus Batman who tries to force the real Batman out of Gotham City–we have a police officer letting Batman know who's boss: "No, you can't legally go after that bandit–the Original Batman is nabbing him!"

But you, on the other hand, can nab some of these original Batman stories if you can find them! ■

Detective #186 (Aug 1952) introduces Batman & Robin's most sensational crime-fighting weapon... "The Flying Bat-Cave!"

Batman vs. Bizarre Costumed Villains

#160 (May 1950) "The Globe Trotter of Crime" (The Globe Trotter)
#168 (Feb 1951) "The Man Behind the Red Hood" (The Joker)
#171 (May 1951) "The Menace of the Giant Birds" (The Penguin)
#172 (Jun 1951) "The Outlaw Who Had Nine Lives" (Paul Gregorian)
#173 (Jul 1951) "The Batman's Double" (Killer Moth)
#180 (Feb 1952) "The Joker's Millions" (The Joker)
#181 (Mar 1952) "The Crimes of the Human Magnet"
#182 (Apr 1952) "The Human Puppets" (The Puppet Master)
#184 (Jun 1952) "The Human Firefly" (The Firefly)
#187 (Sep 1952) "The Double Crimes of Two-Face" (Two-Face)
#193 (Mar 1953) "The Joker's Journal" (The Joker)
#203 (Jan 1954) "The Crimes of the Catwoman"
#204 (Feb 1954) "The Man Who Could Live Forever" (Odo Neval)
#211 (Sep 1954) "The Jungle Cat Queen" (The Catwoman)
#212 (Oct 1954) "The Puppet Master"
#213 (Nov 1954) "The Mysterious Mirror Man"
#230 (Apr 1956) "The Mad Hatter of Gotham City"
#253 (Mar 1958) "The Fox, The Shark and The Vulture" (three villains)
#259 (Sep 1958) "The Calendar Man"
#261 (Nov 1958) "The Amazing Doctor Double-X"
#262 (Dec 1958) "The Jackal of the Underworld"
#267 (May 1959) "Batman Meets Bat-Mite"
#271 (Sep 1959) "Batman's Armored Rival" (The Crimson Knight)
#273 (Nov 1959) "Secret of the Dragon Society" (The Dragon Society)

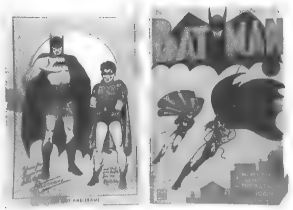
Science Fiction Fantasy and Time Travel

#167 (Jan 1951) "Bodyguards for Cleopatra" (Time Travel)
#205 (Mar 1954) "Origin of the Bat-Cave" (Time Travel)
#208 (Jun 1954) "The Nine Worlds of Batman" (Science Fiction)
#216 (Feb 1955) "The Batman of Tomorrow" (Time Travel)
#217 (Mar 1955) "The Mental Giant of Gotham City" (Science Fiction)
#218 (Apr 1955) "Batman Junior and Robin Senior" (Science Fiction)
#220 (Jun 1955) "The Second Batman and Robin Team" (Time Travel)
#224 (Oct 1955) "The Batman Machine" (Science Fiction)
#239 (Jan 1957) "Batman's Robot Twin" (Science Fiction)
#243 (May 1957) "Batman the Giant" (Science Fiction)
#250 (Dec 1957) "Batman's Super Enemy" (Science Fiction)
#251 (Jan 1958) "The Alien Batman" (Science Fiction but a hoax)
#252 (Feb 1958) "The Creature from the Green Lagoon" (Science Fiction)
#256 (Jun 1958) "The Captive Planet" (Space Travel)
#257 (Jul 1958) "Batman's Invincible Foe" (Science Fiction)
#258 (Aug 1958) "Prisoners of the Giant Robots" (Science Fiction)
#260 (Oct 1958) "The Olympic Games of Space" (Space Travel)
#263 (Jan 1959) "Secret of the Fantastic Weapons" (Science Fiction)
#266 (Apr 1959) "The Satellite of Gotham City" (Science Fiction)
#268 (Jun 1959) "The Power That Doomed Batman" (Science Fiction)
#270 (Aug 1959) "The Creature from Planet X" (Science Fiction)
#272 (Oct 1959) "The Crystal Creature" (Science Fiction) *(Continued)*

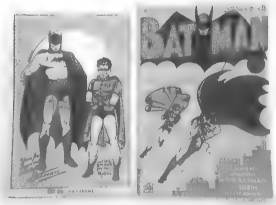
Batman vs. The Underworld

#155 (Jan 1950) "Bruce Wayne, Private Detective"
#157 (Mar 1950) "The Race of the Century"
#159 (Apr 1950) "Bruce Wayne, You Are Batman!"
#161 (Jun 1950) "The Man Who Died on Time"
#162 (Jul 1950) "The Law of the Iron Road" (vs. The Midget)
#163 (Aug 1950) "The Man Who Feared Metal"
#166 (Dec 1950) "The Man With a Million Faces"
#169 (Mar 1951) "Batman–Boss of the Big House" (vs. Squint Tolmar)
#170 (Apr 1951) "The Flying Dutchman II"
#174 (Aug 1951) "The Park Avenue Kid" (vs. The Dagger)
#175 (Sep 1951) "The Underworld Bank" (vs. Beetle Reeves)
#176 (Oct 1951) "The Underworld Crime Committee" (vs. Mr. Velvet)
#177 (Nov 1951) "Robberies in the Bat Cave" (vs. Monroe Peel)
#178 (Dec 1951) "The Defeat of Batman" (Commander Swane)
#179 (Jan 1952) "Bruce Wayne, Mayor of Gotham City"
#183 (May 1952) "The Famous Name Crimes"
#186 (Aug 1952) "The Flying Bat Cave"
#188 (Oct 1952) "Doom in the Bat Cave" (vs. Hook Deering)
#189 (Nov 1952) "The Undersea Hideout" (vs. Mr. Styx)
#191 (Jan 1953) "The Man With A Licence to Kill" (vs. The Executioner)
#192 (Feb 1953) "The Phantom Eye of Gotham City" (vs. Nails)
#194 (Apr 1953) "The Stolen Bank" (vs. Martin Nuff)
#196 (Jun 1953) "The City Without Guns"
#197 (Jul 1953) "The League Against Batman" (The Wrecker)
#198 (Aug 1953) "The Lord of Batmanor"
#199 (Sep 1953) "The Invisible Batman" (vs. Verne Lever)
#200 (Oct 1953) "Radio Station Crime"
#201 (Nov 1953) "The Human Target"
#202 (Dec 1953) "Millionaire Island"
#206 (Apr 1954) "The Trapper of Gotham City" (vs. The Trapper)
#207 (May 1954) "Batman The Magician"
#209 (Jul 1954) "The Man Who Shadowed Batman"
#210 (Aug 1954) "The Brain That Ruled Gotham City"
#214 (Dec 1954) "Secrets of the Batman Encyclopedia" (vs. Herbert Smith)
#215 (Jan 1955) "The Batmen of All Nations" (with guest costumed heroes)
#219 (May 1955) "Gotham City's Strangest Race"
#221 (Jul 1955) "The 1,001 Escapes of Batman and Robin" (vs. Paul King)
#222 (Aug 1955) "The Great Batman Swindle"
#223 (Sep 1955) "The Batman Dime Museum"
#225 (Nov 1955) "If I Were Batman"
#227 (Jan 1956) "The 50 Faces of Batman"
#228 (Feb 1956) "The Outlaw Batman"
#229 (Mar 1956) "The 10,000 Secrets of Batman"
#232 (Jun 1956) "The Outlaw Who Played Batman"
#234 (Aug 1956) "Batman and Robin's Greatest Mystery"
#236 (Oct 1956) "The New Model Batman"
#238 (Dec 1956) "The Doors That Hid Disaster" (vs. Checkmate)
#240 (Feb 1957) "The Outlaw Batman"
#241 (Mar 1957) "The Rainbow Batman"
#242 (Apr 1957) "The Underworld Bat-Cave" (vs. Brainy Walker)
#244 (Jun 1957) "The 100 Batarangs of Batman"
#245 (Jul 1957) "The Dynamic Trio" (with costumed guest Mystery Man)
#246 (Aug 1957) "The Murder at Mystery Castle"
#247 (Sep 1957) "The Man Who Ended Batman's Career" (with costumed Starman)
#248 (Oct 1957) "Around the World in 8 Days"
#249 (Nov 1957) "The Crimes of Bruce Wayne" (with Batwoman, vs. The Collector)
#254 (Apr 1958) "One Ounce of Doom" (with Ace the Bat Hound)
#255 (May 1958) "Death in Dinosaur Hall"
#264 (Feb. 1959) "Peril at Playground Isle"
#269 (Jul 1959) "The Thousand Deaths of Batman and Robin" (vs. The Big Guy)
#274 (Dec 1959) "The Hermit of Mystery Isle" ■

The Doctor is in!



Diagnosis: Patient is in poor health



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BATPLANES TO BATARANGS

Continued from page 31

of "Pocket X", which Batman warned would cause dire consequences if it fell into the wrong hands. Interestingly, in this version of the utility belt, the silken bat rope reels out of the belt's lining, rather than out of one of the compartments.

To jump ahead beyond the '60s, by 1980, the utility belt contents were slightly different, but the tear gas, infra-red flashlight, miniature camera, skeleton keys, and chemicals remained, as did the belt buckle radio (now a transistor radio), which included a JLA signaling device, as it had since the '60s. The Batarang was still shown residing inside one of the lipstick-sized compartments, but technological advancements had added a rebreather and a laser cutting torch to his arsenal. Yet, whatever it contains, the sheer well utility… of the utility belt is the main reason Batman has retained it through the years even as his costume has undergone a myriad of smaller changes to become the film-inspired black suit it is today in the regular *Batman* and *Detective* titles.

As technology in the world at large has advanced, the contents of Batman's utility belt has always reflected these technological advances. Batman has always replaced older equipment with gear that is state of the art. (Hey, being a millionaire crime fighter has its advantages, one of them being able to afford the best toys available.)

"The Batplane," Kane notes in his autobiography, "was also inspired by the pulps: Fox's autogyro, which appeared in *Detective Comics* #31, was modeled after a similar one the Shadow used. (Gardner) Fox added a boomerang and a helicopter-like airplane to Batman's arsenal. Designing them according to the bat motif, I created the Batarang and the first Batplane." The Batplane got periodic make-overs to ensure that Batman's crime-busting abilities remained cutting edge. After its earliest appearance as an autogyro, the Batplane became a bat-winged, bat tailed open cockpit aircraft with a machine gun mounted on it and a realistic-looking bat's head on the front of the fuselage, and this quickly mutated into a streamlined, bat-winged, bat tailed aircraft with a huge bat mask similar to the one on the Batmobile mounted on the nose–and curiously, though it was never described as a jet in those early appearances, a propeller was never in evidence.

"The Birth of the Bat-Plane II" in *Batman* #61 (October/November 1950), saw the jet-powered Bat-Plane II first used to battle a trio of old-style Bat-Planes flown by gangsters. Besides the addition of jet propulsion, the Batplane II boasted a number of other advances that are as yet unequaled in modern aviation: such as a complete on-board crime lab, a magnesium-fired bat-beam from the nose, a "vacuum blanket activator", the ability to convert to a submarine, or sprout helicopter blades from the fuselage, or my favorite: human ejector tubes for the Dynamic Duo. Batman and Robin were shown bombarding a gangster with toy Batplanes and Batmobiles on the cover of *Detective* #197 (July 1953), but those toys were figments of the creators' imaginations. There were no Batman toys in 1953. Actual licensing of things like toy Batmobiles and model Batplanes didn't begin until the TV-inspired *Bat-mania* of 1966 provoked a flood of licensed Batman products. Of course, the Batplane, the Batcopter, and the later Whirly-Bats, were not Batman's only means of aerial locomotion. The cover of *Detective* #153 (November 1949) features a Bat-winged "Flying Batman," and "The Batman of Tomorrow" *Detective* #216 (February 1955) is seen flying with the aid of strap-on jets that give him super-speed.

"Likewise, Batman drove just an ordinary car at first until I put a bat hood on the front and a fin on top, turning it into the Batmobile," Kane recalled. The classic Batmobile–with its high, scalloped tail fin and bat-mask on the front grille–didn't appear until *Batman* #5 (Spring 1941), but it lasted until *Detective* #152 (February 1950), when it was replaced with an even more high-tech model that boasted a bubble cockpit and other advances such as rocket tubes for quick getaways, dash-mounted TV and radar screens, a steel nose for cutting through barriers, a searchlight capable of projecting the Bat-symbol in addition to working as a conventional spotlight, and a radar antenna in the high tailfin. The interior also boasted a laboratory with a built-in workbench. This Batmobile was used until *Batman* #164 (June 1964), when it was replaced by a smaller, sleeker Batmobile which was soon supplanted by the futuristic Chuck Barris-designed Batmobile from the television show in *Detective* #371. By the '70s, the TV Batmobile has been replaced with a low-slung convertible with a bat emblem on the hood. The most recent Batmobile was the movies' high-tech, machine-gun-equipped Batmobile used in both *Batman* (1989) and its sequel, *Batman Returns* (1992). Production designer Anton Furst was reportedly influenced by the streamlined designs of 1930's racing cars. The third film, *Batman Forever* (1995) boasted yet another Batmobile, but with its see-through underlit hood and scalloped bat tail, it was not as aesthetically pleasing as any of the earlier designs. Yet, despite the technological advances of the movies, the old, bat-head roadster from the '50s still exerts considerable sentimental appeal. Both Brian Bolland (in the 1988 graphic novel *The Killing Joke*) and Kelley Jones in the current run of *Batman* pose Batman hunched behind the wheel of this automotive behemoth.

The Batarang has been an essential piece of Bat-gear ever since Gardner Fox introduced it in "Batman Versus the Vampire" *Detective* #31 (September 1939), the same issue in which the Bat-gyro debuted. Incidentally, Batarang was initially spelled Baterang after the spelling of the Aborigine boomerang that inspired it. In the years since its introduction there have been dozens of Batarang variants, which probably reached a peak in *Detective* #244 (June 1957), in the story "The 100 Batarangs of Batman", which cover-featured the Seeing-Eye Batarang, the Magnet Batarang, the Bomb Batarang, the Flash Bulb Batarang, the Police Whistle Batarang, and of course the mysterious "Batarang X", which was the crux of that issue's story.

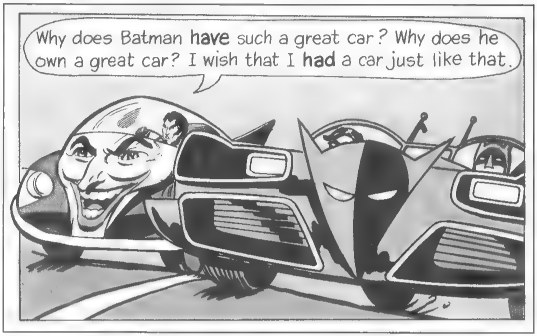
"The Bat Cave also evolved slowly," Bob Kane has noted.

From the Bronze Age (above) and the Golden Age, these two versions of the Batmobile were published more than three decades apart.

"At first it was just a barn for housing the Batplane, then Bill and I made it into a subterranean den loaded with scientific equipment, cases of trophies and files of information. By 1948, the man-made rooms which housed different facilities had become a natural underground cavern. Bill suggested the final design from a magazine layout."

"The Bat Cave came directly out of *Popular Science*," Finger recalled in Volume One of Jim Steranko's *History of Comics*. "It had a cross-section of underground hangars and showed how planes could be drawn up with winches. I cut that out and said, 'By God, that's great.' And I gave the drawing to Bob. He copied it line for line, adding the stalactites and stalagmites for the mysterious touch." Initially, Batman used an underground tunnel to slip back and forth between the Bat-barn and Wayne Manor, and the Batmobile and Batplane were stored in nondescript, secret locations. Yet, like all of Batman's gear, the Bat Cave, too, has undergone periodic renovations and infusions of new technology. The first Batman serial in 1943 contributed one element that was quickly incorporated into the Bat Cave of the comics: a spiral staircase hidden behind a grandfather clock that led down into the Bat Cave. Perhaps the most bizarre variant was "The Flying Bat Cave," an aerial crime lab employed in *Detective* #196 (June 1953) and rarely seen since. One of the most notable additions was when Batman added computers in the early '60s, thereby updating his outmoded system of cross-indexed files. The Bat Cave's history was thoroughly plumbed in "The Origin of the Bat-Cave" *Detective* #205 (March 1954). In a story which had Batman and Robin discussing the Bat-Cave's past (complete with the requisite cutaway diagram), and all of the work that goes into updating and maintaining a secret headquarters. As Batman observes while they're laying wire to support the increased current load their updated equipment demanded: "But we had some pretty knotty problems to lick, didn't we? For instance, there was the Bat-Signal which we couldn't see from the Bat-Cave." Continuing, Batman observes, "This transmitter will beam a photo-electric cell directly over police headquarters. Any time the Bat-Signal flashes on, it will interrupt the cell and illuminate the red bulb." Batman and Robin also reminisced about the problems they'd had rigging up an antenna for their big screen television in the Bat-Cave, before getting to the main thrust of the story. Robin finds a pottery shard which gives clues to the Bat-Cave's past. To unravel this mystery, the Dynamic Duo take a trip through time courtesy of their friend Professor Nichols, to the Colonial era, in which they learn that the Bat-Cave was the headquarters of a frontiersman named Jeremy Coe, who used it as his HQ in order to disguise himself as an Indian and spy on the tribes who are planning to attack the white settlers.

It was during the '40s that Bill Finger introduced a motif that's become inextricably linked with Batman: fight scenes amidst giant props. "I would buy copies of *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics*, which covered every subject imaginable," Finger recounted, "I'd clip them and give these drawings



Cover art sans logo from Detective #197 (Jul 1953). Was DC subliminally promoting 1950's Bat-Toys?

Classic panel from The Super Dictionary (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978; cover by Joe Kubert) written for young readers. Besides Batman, Robin, and the Joker, this scarce Bronze Age DC collectible also features (among many others) Batgirl, Penguin, and Catwoman.

to Bob Kane along with the story. I once found an article on a giant typewriter used for an exhibition at a trade show and used it as a prop in script."

This period also saw Batman and Robin team up with Superman on the covers of *World's Best*, (soon to be changed to *World's Finest*), though the three heroes would not actually share a storyline until issue #71. This co-starring slot would prove to be one of Batman's most enduring gigs outside the pages of his own magazines, lasting until *World's Finest* ceased publication in 1986. Batman writer/editor Dennis O'Neil has suggested in interviews that this team-up began Batman's transformation into "a benign scoutmaster," rather than a terrifying vigilante from the darkness.

After World War II ended and Batman no longer had the "Japanazis" to kick around, the plots of his stories became even more focused on giant props (like a titanic replica of Two-Face's two-headed silver dollar, or a fight staged on a titanic pool table) and exotic adventure in far-flung locales like the Himalayas *Batman* #93 (August 1955), a lost Mayan city *Batman* #142 (September 1961), or the fabled Sargasso Sea *Batman* #122 (March 1959).

Stories stressed Batman's skills as a master detective, aided by a seemingly endless supply of Bat-Gadgets. The late '40s did see a spate of new villains appear, notably the Riddler (who made only two Golden Age appearances, but was revived to great effect during the run of the *Batman* TV show), Killer Moth, and King of the Cats, who was revealed to be the Catwoman's brother ('natch).

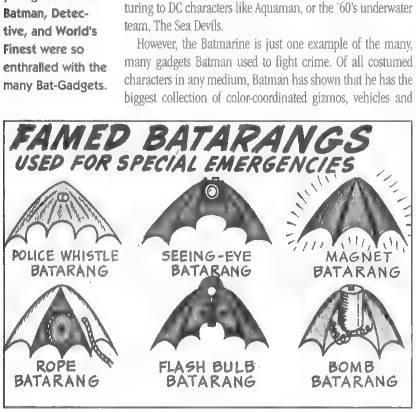
As early as *Batman* #68 (December/January 1951) in "The New Crimes of Two-Face," Batman was using a bat-styled frog man suit to pursue Two-Face's submarine, well before "The Voyage of the First Batmarine" in *Batman* #86, but Batman rarely used that afterward, preferring to leave undersea adventuring to DC characters like Aquaman, or the '60's underwater team, The Sea Devils.

However, the Batmarine is just one example of the many, many gadgets Batman used to fight crime. Of all costumed characters in any medium, Batman has shown that he has the biggest collection of color-coordinated gizmos, vehicles and costumes. As just one example of a throw-away gadget, there is the purple Bat-Tank, used only in *Detective* #236 (October 1956) in a story titled "The New-Model Batman", which also saw the Bat Signal temporarily replaced by a loudspeaker. He seemingly has a gadget for every situation, something that reached absurd heights in the gimmicky '50's stories.

By the '50s, Batman's scripters, even experienced, talented writers like Edmond Hamilton, Arnold Drake and Leigh Brackett, were clearly running out of creative steam and the stories became more and more gimmicky and fantastic. For example, there were at least four issues of *Detective* that featured Batman or Robin robots (#s 224, 239,281, and 290). The cover for *Detective* #239 was especially unusual in that it was the only Batman cover executed as a wash painting, something that was generally reserved for DC's war and science fiction comics. Another fifties gimmick was alternate costumes, as in *Detective* #165, which featured, "The Strange Costumes of Batman!", including the winter white-camouflaged batsuit he wore in "The North Pole Crimes!" in *World's Finest* #7 (Fall, 1942), the first time Bats ever wore an alternate costume, his Interplanetary Suit, worn in the story, "Crimes of the Future", the Golden Garb from, "The Modern Midas", and the luminous costume he wore to defeat Professor Radium. Even sillier was the cover of *Detective* #241 (March 1957), featuring, "The Rainbow Batman", which depicted Batman wearing a magenta batsuit, with orange, purple, green, and yellow batsuits shown in the background. And to illustrated just how silly the '50's and early '60's scripts got, there were also, "The Giant Batman" *Detective* #243 (May 1957), "The Alien Batman" *Detective* #251 (January 1958), "The Merman Batman" *Batman* #118 (September 1958), "The Zebra Batman" *Detective* #275 (January 1960), "The Negative Batman" *Detective* #284 (October 1960), yet another giant Batman in "The Colossus of Gotham City" *Detective* #292 (June 1961) and of course, who can forget, "Batman meets Bat-Mite", his first appearance *Detective* #267 (May 1959). For collectors, one of the best overviews of this gimmicky period can be found in *Batman Annual* #1 (1961), which features "1,001 Secrets of Batman and Robin", including: "Strange Costumes," the "Origin of the Bat-Cave," "Tales of the Bat-Signal" and "Amazing Inventions, plus secrets of the Utility Belt and the famed Batarangs", among other stories. The 1953 Batman 3-D comic, published to cash in on the short-lived 3-D craze, seemed perfectly in keeping with the gimmicky stories of this era.

Of course, Batman's comics career wasn't helped by falling victim to the "Superman Syndrome," which meant that by the end of the '50s the *Batman* titles were host to a Batwoman (circus performer Kathy Kane, debuting in *Detective* #233 (July, 1956), a Batgirl (Kathy's niece Betty, debuting in *Batman* #139), Ace, the Bathound (who debuted in *Batman* #92), and even a Mr. Mxyptlk knock-off, the Bat-Mite, an alien pixie. Unlike Superman's magical nemesis, Bat-Mite didn't hate Batman. The mischievous sprite created chaos in Gotham out of his hero-worship of Batman and a desire to see Bats strut his stuff.

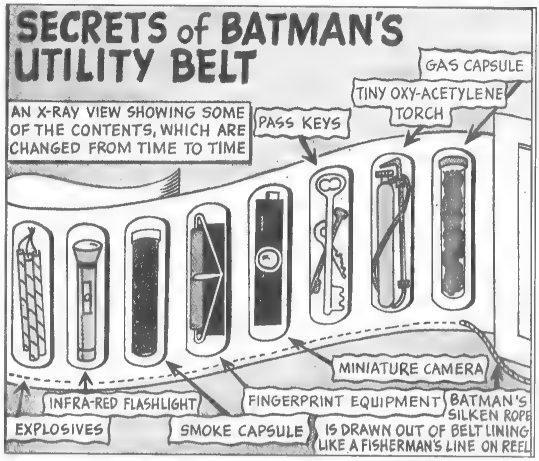
Although far-fetched in their design, these six "famed Batarangs used for special emergencies" provide nostalgic insight into why young readers of Batman, Detective, and World's Finest were so enthralled with the many Bat-Gadgets.



Batman stories from the early '50s through the early '60s are regarded by most contemporary fans as something of an aberration, what with their outlandish villains and gimmicky sci-fi plots. By 1964, things had reached such a nadir with Batman that desperate measures were called for. Jack Schiff, who had edited Batman since the '40s was jettisoned in favor of Julius Schwartz, who had enjoyed excellent success with his Silver Age revivals of The Green Lantern, The Flash, Hawkman and The Atom. The DC brass obviously hoped that he could do the same with Batman. Despite his long years as a science fiction fan, editor and agent for a number of science fiction writers, Schwartz wisely canned the sci-fi junk, along with Batwoman, Batgirl, Bat-Mite and Ace the Bathound, then recruited former Batman scribe Gardner Fox, along with artists Carmine Infantino, Joe Giella, Gil Kane and Murphy Anderson. This revitalization, called "The New Look," gave Batman his first major costume makeover since the late '30s, adding a spiffy yellow oval framing the bat-symbol on his chest, and brought back many of the classic Golden Age villains.

However, Schwartz' "New Look" was quickly supplanted by the camp madness of the *Batman* TV show. The Caped Crusader's television career was sparked by a chance meeting between editor Schwartz and producer William Dozier. The two were seatmates on a cross-country flight and Dozier, with nothing to read, borrowed some comics from Schwartz. Dozier was immediately intrigued with Batman, and especially the Riddler, the Golden Age villain Schwartz had revived in Batman #171 (even though his only two previous appearances had been in *Detective* #140 (October 1948) and #142 (December 1948). *Batman*, starring Adam West and Burt Ward, debuted on ABC in January of 1966 with the novel feature of being broadcast on two consecutive nights. As in the serials, the first show always ended in a cliffhanger. In the second show, of course, the Dynamic Duo triumphed over that week's guest foe. Some villains, such as the Joker, the Riddler, the Catwoman and the Penguin, were right out of the comics. Others, like King Tut, Egghead and the Bookworm, were solely TV creations. At any rate, the show was a smash, and the ensuing publicity boosted comic book sales to over 1 million copies a month. By 1967, *Bat-Mania* was in full swing and there were over 1,000 new licensed products on the market, from toys to costumes to model kits, toiletries, posters, and one of the very first comic book-based portfolios, drawn by no less than Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson. Holy Merchandise, Batman!

The popularity of the television show spawned a quickly mounted 1966 feature film that pitted the Dynamic Duo against the Penguin, the Riddler, the Catwoman and the Joker. The film's bigger budget permitted the creation of expensive props outside the budget of a television program that included the Batboat, the Batcycle, and the Batcopter (all later recycled in the TV show, of course).


SECRETS of BATMAN'S UTILITY BELT
GAS CAPSULE
TINY OXY-ACETYLENE TORCH
AN X-RAY VIEW SHOWING SOME OF THE CONTENTS, WHICH ARE CHANGED FROM TIME TO TIME
PASS KEYS
MINIATURE CAMERA
INFRA-RED FLASHLIGHT
FINGERPRINT EQUIPMENT
BATMAN'S SILKEN ROPE IS DRAWN OUT OF BELT LINING LIKE A FISHERMAN'S LINE ON REEL
EXPLOSIVES
SMOKE CAPSULE

Drooping ratings in the final season even sparked the creation of a new Batgirl (played by a curvy dancer named Yvonne Craig). The new Batgirl, who debuted in the comics in *Detective* #326, was Commissioner Gordon's librarian daughter. In a novel switch, designers for the TV show provided the comics with Batgirl's new costume. 1968 proved to be the final year of the *Batman* TV show, though since its prime-time demise, it has lived on endlessly in syndication all over the world. But by '68, camp was dead, on TV, and in the comics, so a new writer and artist (Dennis O'Neil and Neal Adams), were brought on to take Batman back to his dark roots, back into the shadows, where he belonged.

At present, Batman still has an arsenal of Bat-Gadgets, including the Batmobile, Batplane, Batcopter and so on, but he rarely uses them. The Darknight Detective has come full circle, and the emphasis is now less on gadgetry and gimmicks, and more on mood, atmosphere, and the Batman's tortured, and endlessly fascinating personality. ■

As the Batman mythos continued in the late '40s and early '50s, more and more stories were centered around Batman's Utility Belt. Two of the most collectible issues cover feature the famed belt... Star Spangled #91 (Apr 1949) and Detective #185 (May 1952).

Steve Ringgenberg has been a professional writer since 1980. His credits include scripts for DC & Marvel, and more than 100 interviews with comics industry professionals.

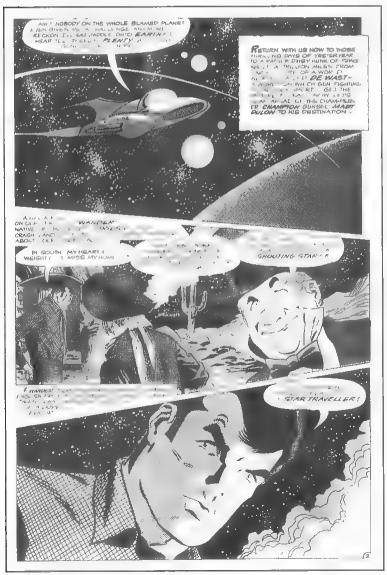
at Charlton," Aparo remembers. "It was more like a training ground; Dick Giordano was a great boss, a great guy Charlton was going to be a force to be reckoned with. Their only problem (from what I understand) was distribution. If you can't get your product where you want it to go, you're in trouble."

Aparo's first Charlton work was Miss Bikini Luv -a teenage humor strip featured in the first nine issues of *Go-Go* (June 1966-October 1967). Though dated, Miss Bikini Luv is worth owning–if only to enjoy Aparo's lighter, looser touch and to recapture some old 1960's memories.

From Miss Bikini Luv, Aparo went on to romance, western and horror work in the pages of anthology books like *The Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves*, *Ghostly Tales* and *Just Married*. Aparo also drew two backup, superhero features–Prankster and Nightshade–both short-lived and nothing special.

Aparo's first memorable work was a western Wander. This strip teamed Aparo with Denny O'Neil, then writing as Sergius O'Shaugnessy. They chronicled the adventures of Wander, a native of the planet Sirius V, who crash-landed in the old west Wander dressed like a cowboy, talked like Shakespeare, (he learned English from an old book!) and attracted alien menaces like a magnet. Although a great concept, well written and well drawn, it only lasted as a back-up feature in *Cheyenne Kid* from issue #66 87 "Wander was a good strip, a comedy strip. I enjoyed doing it," Aparo says today.

Wander, "The Fastest Gun in De West," Cheyenne Kid #70 (Jan 1969), page 2.


AH! NOBODY ON THE WHOLE BLAMED PLANET
RETURN WITH US NOW TO THOSE
WANDER
IN SOUTH MY HEART IS WEIGHT
GREATING STAR
STAR TRAVELLER!

Aparo's best-remembered Charlton work is probably The Phantom, Lee Falk's classic character. Aparo drew the covers of the Phantom's first 17 issues and drew the interiors for issues #31-34, 36-38, 60 and 61. This is solid work with one foot in the pulps and the other in the grand adventure comic strips of the '30s and '40s.

When Giordano moved to DC in late 1967, he brought along his core crew of Aparo, O'Neil, Boyette, Steve Ditko and Steve Skeates. Aparo's first DC assignment was Aquaman With issue #40 (July/August 1968), Aparo joined Giordano and writer, Skeates, for a residency that lasted two-and-a-half years and 16 issues.

In the pages of *Aquaman* Aparo came into his own. Giordano's support and Skeates' creativity fueled Aparo's best work to date. Suddenly the sea king encountered alien dimensions, a western town based in his own mind (and very similar to Wander), urban landscapes and far away galaxies. The feature exploded with excitement and Aparo's artwork provided the combustion. His Aquaman rivaled Jim Steranko, Neal Adams and other innovators of the day.

Aparo looks back on his *Aquaman* run with typical modesty. "I was as good as Steve Skeates' stories, and Steve did a great job writing Aquaman. I think I only attended two story conferences with Dick and Steve in New York at DC. It got to the point where Dick and Steve meshed. They would write the stuff–they knew I could handle it–and I would read it and draw it. It was great."

Like Raymond and other early comic strip artists, Aparo inked and lettered his own work. One man handling all three assignments was unique in comic books, even back in the '60s. For Aparo to pencil, ink and letter all the way through to the mid 1980s is unprecedented.

Also in the tradition of the great comic strip artists, Aparo worked by himself, out of his Connecticut home. "You know to this day I've never met Steve Ditko… I'm a pretty reclusive guy, too. We do our stuff and that's all we're concerned with."

While continuing work on *Aquaman*, Aparo was given a new assignment by Joe Orlando, who was drafted by DC in 1968 to rebuild their horror line. Orlando needed a permanent artist for The Phantom Stranger–a macabre revival of the Carmine Infantino illustrated feature from the '50s. With issue #7 (May/ June 1970) Aparo began a 20 issue, three year run.

"Joe is a very creative, friendly man very easy to get along with. He was a great guy to work with. All the editors I worked with were great."

"The Phantom Stranger was one of my favorites," Aparo says today. " His adventures took place all over the world and I made many trips to the library to research them."

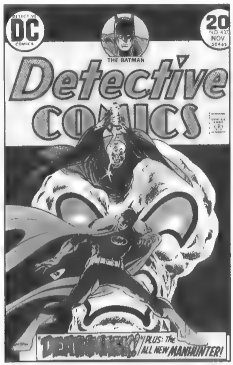
Besides giving Aparo the opportunity to work with Orlando and exciting young writers like Len Wein and Gerry Conway, Phantom Stranger solidified his reputation as a superb horror artist. Out of this work came his greatest assignment– Batman–appearing with a slew of co-stars in *The Brave and The Bold*. This assignment lasted 13 years, making him the longest running Batman artist ever.

"The first *Brave & Bold* I did was with the Phantom Stranger (issue #98 October/November 1971). That came about because I was doing The Phantom Stranger and *Brave and Bold*'s editor, Murray

Boltinoff, asked for the guy who was drawing the Phantom Stranger's book. I was kind of nervous over drawing Batman," recalls Aparo. "I had never drawn Batman to be published before… but I did it. I drew the first page twice just to make sure I got it right." And certainly, Aparo did "get it right." His Batman was lean and mysterious–in the tradition of Neal Adam's revival of the character's Golden Age roots begun two years earlier.

"Everybody drawing Batman was influenced by Neal. Before Neal, the Batman stories had gotten sort of campy. I guess they were trying to emulate the Batman TV show, and that was fun. But when Adams got on it he decided to bring Batman back to the Dark Knight. I thought his stuff was great–the best–and I decided that if I ever got to do Batman, I was going to emulate him. And that's what I did."

"Everybody was influenced by Neal. Even Dick Giordano told me that when he inked other pencilers, he would make them look like Neal Adams. But then he realized that wasn't right. Dick told me later that every penciler was different and the inker should emulate what's penciled."



Batman, "Deathmask," Detective #437 (Oct/Nov 1973)

"When I was a youngster, I loved Dick Sprang's work on Batman," Aparo says. "When I was a younger kid I'd see Bob Kane's name on all the stuff and think 'Gee, this thing looks different from month to month.' It turns out that Bob Kane didn't do them all–Dick Sprang and other people that he (Kane) had hired did them."

"Murray Boltinoff was tough," Aparo chuckles. "He was a nice guy, an ex-military man… I got along with him fine. He knew what I could do. I did my thing, he did his, and we got along great. He did things by the book. He had a schedule and kept us to it."

Schedule or not, Aparo allowed himself a bit of fun on *Brave and Bold*. "In the book I would draw some kind of clue, say an arrow for Green Arrow, to give the fans an idea who the guest would be in the next issue." (Get out those *B&B* back issues, gang.)

"I enjoyed all the team-ups in the *Brave and the Bold*. Bob Haney (Aparo's primary *B&B* collaborator) was a great writer. The only one that gave me a little hardship was Sgt. Rock because I'm not a war artist," Aparo recalls. "So naturally, Joe Kubert saved the day. If I had to swipe, he was the guy to swipe from, because he was Sgt. Rock and I had to go by him. There was no way I could do it any other way."

Aparo did his first work on the solo Batman in *Detective Comics* #437 (October/November 1973). Following his spectacular 1930's film noir style cover, the reader flipped to the splash page and was greeted by Aparo's urgent, interior artwork. Writer/editor Archie Goodwin stretched Aparo to new excellence. Their early '70s *Detective* issues are highly recommended.

Aparo's next project was the return of the Spectre–a feature best remembered today for its over the top, "EC style" violence. Written by Michael Fleisher and edited by Joe Orlando, the Spectre ran as the lead feature in *Adventure Comics* (issue #432 March/April 1973-#440 July/Aug 1974).

A decade before the bloody comic books of the '80s, the Spectre let the punishment fit the crime– slicing and dicing bad guys all over the printed page. How does Aparo remember the Grim Ghost today?

"I used to tell Mike Fleisher 'You're nuts, you know,' and he would laugh like hell. There was a big controversy over the Spectre–people would say 'the guy's killing all these people'–but the Vietnam War was going full blown at the time."

"I liked the Spectre and enjoyed drawing it. Mike never told me to tone it down. For example, he'd write that the Spectre was going to create a pair of giant scissors and cut this guy in half and I'd think there's no way the (Comic) Code is going to let this in," Aparo remembers with a laugh. "So I drew the scene behind a curtain, you just saw the handles close–otherwise we wouldn't have gotten by the Code."

Over 20 years after the demise of the Spectre, Aparo continues to do excellent work for DC.

No longer drawing a regular book, Aparo nevertheless draws at least one title each month.

"They're keeping me busy, Batman, Green Arrow, Superboy and the Ravers. DC is always giving me something. As soon as I'm near the end of what I'm doing I call them up and they've got something ready for me."

"I enjoy the movies," Aparo says with a description that should sound familiar to any fan of his work. "That's where I get a lot of my ideas for plotting and storytelling, you know, the camera angles. The best movie I ever saw was Key Largo with Humphrey Bogart and Edgar G. Robinson. The movie was in black and white, on an island during a hurricane. It was eerie–especially when a lightning bolt would flash through a half boarded window and light up the characters–the shadows on the walls, the camera angles, the front and back of heads and so on."

A recent photo of Jim Aparo

One reason that Jim Aparo hasn't received the accolades of an Adams or Steranko is that, unlike those two gentlemen, Aparo has stayed in comic books. Though it might be easier to examine an artist's body of work from a scholarly distance, he provides no such quarter. Jim Aparo is a working comic book artist with both hands on his drawing board. ■

Special thanks to Mark Evanier for his help with this article.

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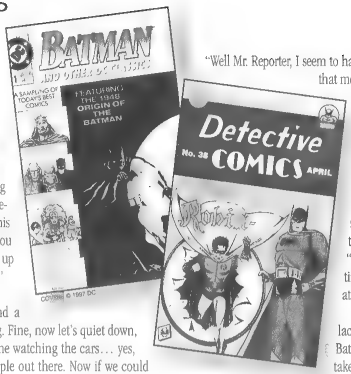
SECOND TIME AROUND
by Shawn Hamilton

Batman Villains



"This is Shawn Hamilton coming to you live from a secret warehouse location. Thanks to this portable remote broadcasting equipment, you will be able to hear every word, as I follow up on a hot news tip that I received just today."

"SHHH! I think I hear them coming."

"Okay, okay… if everyone would find a seat near the front we'll get things rolling. Fine, now let's quiet down, what's that? Yes Joker, we do have someone watching the cars… yes, I realize that there are a lot of crazy people out there. Now if we could just get started."

BANG! BANG! BANG!

"I would like to call to order this week's secret meeting of The "BBBV"– The "Battered and Bruised Batman's Villains" support group. Thanks to everyone for coming!"

"As you know, I am Harvey Dent… aka Two Face, and I will be presiding over tonight's meeting. The Association wishes to thank Mr. E. Nigma for following the group's suggestion of removing the names of your henchmen, Who? What? and Where? from the front of their sweaters, it just made us all look bad Ed, thanks again, and to Poison Ivy for the lovely refreshments. For those of you who are vegetarians, Ms. Ivy says that you are just Plum out of luck! HA! HA! HA!"

"On to new business.... Fellow members, for years we have been portrayed by the media as bunglers, incompetents and fools… and not as the criminal geniuses that we are! But we have feelings too. It's not our fault that we let Batman escape by putting him in some elaborate escape-proof trap instead of just shooting him while he was unconscious, and besides we're good enough, we're smart enough and doggone it, other villains like us! It is time to set the record straight and force DC Comics to quit printing their LIES!!!"

"I, Two Face, have orchestrated the greatest master plan ever perpetrated by a Batman arch villain! I have stolen DC's copies of the most rare and expensive Batman comic books and will hold them for ransom until DC gives us the respect that we so rightly deserve! HA! HA! HA!!!"

"Just look at the treasures that I hold in my hands!!!"

CRASH!!! "Two Face, there's someone hiding back there… with a radio transmitter!!!"

"Well then...GET HIM!!!"

"OW! Let me go!"

"Well, well. What do we have here. It appears that we have an unvited guest and he knows all about our little plan. What should we do with him Joker?"

"I say we electrocute him with my 100,000 volt joy buzzer." "HO! HO! HEE! HEE!!"

"Penguin?"

"Tar and feather him! Waa! Waa! Waa!"

"Well Mr. Reporter, I seem to have two choices and you know what that means, it's time for a coin toss."

"Do whatever you want to me Two Face, but I know DC will never give into your demands… and if you kill me, you'll never know the reason."

"We'll let the coin decide… heads you live to tell me your secret, tails we kill you now and take our chances."

"It's heads...you stay alive for the time being! Now tell me how the fools at DC can refuse us!"

"Well, Two Face, by sending your lackeys to steal the most valuable Batman comics from DC you didn't take into account that DC has reprinted many of the most desirable Batman stories in inexpensive formats. In fact, what you have in your hands are some of those reprints."

"For example, that isn't a *Detective* #27 from May 1939 that retails for $140,000, but a *Famous First Edition* #C-28 from 1974. It reprints the entire contents of *Detective* #27 as well as the cover and ads, you aren't the first person to make this mistake. And that *Batman* #1...."

"It's not really a *Batman* #1?"

"Nope! It's the *Famous First Editions* #F-5 from December 1974 reprinting *Batman* #1 in its entirety."

"And that *Detective* #38 with the first appearance of Robin is not from April 1940… it's from 1995 when DC produced a special replica edition to be given away with Batman video sales. It even contains the classic two page story 'The Legend Of Batman And How He Came To Be' from *Detective Comics* #33."

"Did you say given away?"

"That's right Two Face, given away! Just like that 'Origin of Batman' story that was presented in *Batman* #47, June 1948… what you have there is the 1989 DC/Diamond Comics giveaway *Batman and Other DC Classics* #1– another freebie! Even your best stories, Two Face, have been reprinted… including your very first 'The Crimes of Two Face' from *Detective* #66 (August 1942), 'The Man Who led a Double Life' from *Detective* #68 (October 1942), and even 'The End of Two Face' from *Detective* #80 (October 1943). They're all reprinted in one comic… *DC 100 page Super Spectacular* #DC-20 (September 1973)."

"You mean none of these are expensive or hard to find?"

"NOPE!"

"I can't do anything right. I might as well give up the super villain racket once and for all… maybe Calvin Klein is looking for a fresh face."

"Wait Two Face, you did steal some really great reprints, you got everyone together, and you even have refreshments. I'd say that you've got the makings of a great pajama party, if you just untie me."

"You're right Shawn… let's party!"

"OK, but I hope I survive the super villain pillow fight. OUCH! Cut it out Blockbuster, that really hurt!" ■

Guides for $14... sells for $200? Don't be surprised!

As temperatures rise, so does the seasonal interest in our hobby. Conventions are in full swing, new trends are being established, old trends are disappearing, and everyone is looking to discover that next "find." Research shows that the hobby has never been as diverse as it is now. Golden Age collectors are looking into pulps, movie posters, good girl calendars, and odd-ball premiums. Silver Age collectors are finding a wealth of material that was put out by Marvel in the late '60s and early '70s, along with scarce Batman/TV related stuff. Meanwhile, all collectors love to quietly go about gathering their latest targets of opportunity... trying not to bring attention to their "private" quests... lest others join it!

Pre Golden Age/Golden Age (1933-45)

Sometimes collectors get so caught up in the grade of a book that they lose sight of their main goal... which often is to put together a collection of great books that please the owner–not the "correct" selection for a quick resale. Key books in GD to VG are viewed as very desirable and interesting to a majority of collectors. As a certain softness is perceived in some books over $2,000, that stimulates continued growth in those lower grade copies that have stickers under this glass ceiling.

Sales: The Funnies #3 GD $140; Four Color #38 (Roy Rogers) VF+ $1400; Green Mask Comics #2 GD/VG $225; Hit Comics #2 GD $365; Jackpot #4 FN+ $900; Mickey Mouse Magazine #4 FN $200; Military Comics #1 GD $1,100; More Fun #65 GD $75; Popular Comics #5 GD $135; Prize Comics #1 AppVF $875; Smash Comics #14 VG $525.

Post Golden Age/Pre Silver Age (1946-56)

"The Alice in Wonderland" genre! There seems to be no rules, no rhyme or reason to pricing, no inhibitions... and no end to these trends in sight. Do high grade books that are over 40 years old sell for under $40? Usually not, although the guides still list many at these ultra low prices (and therein lies a great opportunity for collector and investor alike). Remember how astounded we were when Gold was selling for so many multiples? To put a fine point on it, these books are selling for even higher multiples, and in any and all grades. Good Girl, Pre-Code Horror, Pre-Code Crime, Odd-ball Westerns, Frazetta artwork, Kubert un-credited artwork, late numbered Fiction House, and anything with Matt Baker art (among many others) is all highly sought after by collectors and selling like hotcakes. Collectors should no longer be surprised when a pre-code horror book guiding for $14 sells for over $200... and in GD to VG condition too! Brace yourselves, it is going to be a very exciting summer convention ride!

Sales: Girl Confession #15 VF/NM $82; Horrific #3 VG $210; The Horrors #13 FN $112; Jackie Robinson 32 FN $160; The Killers #1 AppVF $399; Mad Comics #1 GD $520, #2 GD $198; Master Comics #133 VF/NM $200; Mighty Mouse #5 GD $75; My Love Affair #1 VF $150; My Secret Affair #1 FN $95; Nightmare #12 FN $120; Strange Fantasy #8 VG 480; Strange Tales #8 NM- $550; Strange Tales of the Unusual #1 FN $155.

Silver Age (1956-69)

I've heard from more than one dealer and collector that they expect this to be the summer for Silver. Over optimistic? It is hard to say at this time, but sales have been strong so far, and it seems that most sellers have finally found a workable level for discounting lower grade SA material. An attitude of "now or never" seems to permeate collectors when they consider their chances of

Continued on page 71

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More reader/collectors are now buying lesser grade material. Our customers seem to like lower grade... a more affordable way to complete those runs. Higher grade books, while always in demand, seem to be sitting more than in the past, as many are offered at multiples of Guide. As a dealer, purchasing high grade Silver and Gold can be difficult. Also sellers want top dollar, leaving little room for movement for the X-times-Guide books

Buyers, upon seeing the decline in new and recent back issues, try to connect some non-existent tie between these two unrelated markets and want discounts on older/higher grade books. So the renewed interest in lesser grades makes dealing a pleasure. This interest also covers a wide genre of titles from superheroes to sci-fi to funny animal.

Sales: Showcase #40 VF $200, Adventure #356 NM $12; Amazing Spider-Man #53 VF+ $30; #60 VF+ $30; #69 VF+ $20, #74 NM $45, #121 NM $180; Brenda Starr (Dell) #1 FN $45; Doll Man Quarterly #8 (first Torchy) FN $250, Slave Girl #1 VF- $300, All Great #13 (first Dagar) VG $80; Dagar #16 F+ $180; Jo Jo #25 VF- $500; Bold Stories Mar 1950 (extremely rare) FN+ $450; Candid Tales nn (scarce) FN+ $450–both of these contain Wood art and are the first we have ever seen outside of Gerber's

The above is a compilation of store sales, consignment and regional recorded sales Looking forward to San Diego Comic-Con, and hope to see you there–stop by and say hello

Continued on page 70

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MARKET REPORTS

Continued from page 68

TED VAN LIEW, SUPERWORLD COMICS

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Golden Age cover collecting is now common and causes a log-jam of demand for certain books. Timelys and More Fun, pre #100 Adventure, and Flash Comics sell briskly. Pre #38 Detectives are on a lot of want lists lately. Anything by Lou Fine sells. Hit, National, Police and Plastic Man are selling well. Sales. Action #25 GD $150; Adventure #93 VG $170; Captain America #72 VG $325; Green Hornet #20 F/VF $185; Leading #3 FN $315; Suspense #4 GD/VG and #9 VG/FN $900; Young Allies #16 F/VF $285.

50's Horror and Science Fiction

This category leads the way. Basil Wolverton art/covers fly out the door. Demand for the average Cole book has slowed, but the real classics are still sought after. Sales: Amazing Detective #11 VF $85; Adventures into Darkness #7 VG/FN $75; Flying Saucers #1 VG+ $155, Mr. Mystery #13 VG/FN $150; Space Detective #4 FN- $90; The Thing! #4 FN/VF $125; Weird Horrors #1 VG/FN $110; Witchcraft #1 VG/FN $110.

Silver Age DC and Marvels continue to sell well in high grades. The Marvels need to be in VF/NM to insure a quick sale, and the DCs in VF. Lesser grade books need to be discounted substantially to move them. So much volume of lesser grade Marvels and DCs have hit the market in the last several years that most books have actually become common in the Good to Fine range.

This does make buying for resale tricky, as a lot of prospective sellers use the Overstreet Price Guide value to set their price for their collection, while the actual market is depressed on these items.

That nebulous middle grade range (Fine to

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Very Fine) is a tough sell for comics from the mid-'60s and later, but actually advantageous on earlier, harder to get books such as Brave & Bold or early Showcase. Sales: Batman #100 G+ $215 & #181 NM $150; Green Lantern #10 NM $325, JIM #115 NM $85; Spidey #6 NM $1,500; Superman #126 VF+ $175 & #128 NM $255, Annual #1 VF $475

Bronze Age (1970-79) The '70s appear to be arriving, led by certain key books. Sales: Batman #251 VF/NM $45; zillions of other Batmans from #220-320; Jimmy Olsen #133 NM $25; Marvel Spotlight #2 NM $65; Tomb of Dracula #1 NM $75.

That's all for now. 'Til next time, may the Moons of Moonipor shine on your collection

LON WEBB, DARK ADVENTURE INTL.

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Here are results from our recent auction:

Golden Age All Winners #21-VG $918; Blackhawk #16-VF+ $200; Capt. Aero #13-G $60; Capt. Aero #25-F $192; Crown #5-VF+ $145; Dynamic #22-NM $218; Feature NN #26A-VG $108; Flash Wheaties-VG $280; Mad #6-F+ $125; Manhunt #1-VF/NM $302; Planet #28-VG $118; Submariner #21-VF $451; True Crime #3-F $248; Wonder #12-VF $308; Wonder Woman #53-F $99.

Good Girl/Romance Daring Love #1-G $201; Jumbo #48-F/VG $133; Millie #3-NM $178, #7-NM $182; Secret Love Stories (Fox)-VG $53; Venus #2-F $155, #5-VG $178.

1950s Horror/Sci-Fi Brick Bradford #6-G/VG $72; Fantastic #10 (Ajax)-FN $46, Horrific #2-G $61, #3-VG $265, #8-G/VG $61, #11-VG $54; Phantom Lady #2 (Ajax)-VG $87; Strange Fantasy #13-VG/F $55; Terrific #14-VG $64, Weird Terrors #8-F $97.

Silver Age (1956-69) Capt. America #100-NM $212; DD #9-NM $97; 80 page Giant #13-VF $70; FF #10-VF $551, Our Army At War #81-FN $139; Wonder Woman #105-GD $138; X-Men #22-NM $96.

100 Pagers DC-6-VF $85; DC-7-NM $75; DC-8-VF/NM $85; DC-11-NM $99; DC-14-VF+ $73; Young Love #107-F+ $120; Young Love #108-FN/VF $67; Young Romance #197-FN/VF $74; Young Romance #198-VF $106 ■

completing a run of Batman, Brave & Bold, Flash, Hulk, or Daredevil. As some have mis-interpreted, interest never went away, it was just pricing on the lower grade material that got out of hand. This "mutual" agreement among sellers and buyers about pricing and collecting seems to have sparked a resurgence in this area.

Brave & Bold #34 GD $145, #34 VF/NM $1,760; Green Lantern #2 GD $40; Hulk #5 AppVF/NM $1,200; Iron Man #1 VG $75; Journey into Mystery #83 GD $435; Nick Fury #1 NM $70; Richie Rich #1 FN/FN+ $460; Strange Adventure #205 VF/NM $110; Showcase #4 AppFN $3,400, #57 NM $145 Herbie #1 VF $150; Secret Six #1 VF $55 ; Tales of Suspense #39 VG- $600.

Bronze Age (1970-79)

The vault is quietly opening and more and more information is spilling out for all to learn from and use. Scarcity drives the market right now, and those stingy bits of confirmed information regarding scarcity are slowly making their way to the marketplace. Homer the Happy Ghost? Harvey? A Vampirella Hardcover? Super DC Specials?

These are not your mainstream books, but they are the currency of '70s collectors. As with any new facet of the hobby, those that are impatient to get hard-to-find books (especially from the early '70s in grade) are willing to spend amounts that may seem ridiculous now. Yet down the road, who can say where these prices might go?

Sales: Adventure #431 VF/NM $20; Championship Sports #1 NM $14; DC 100 Page Super Spectacular #5 GD $120; Dead of Night #11 NM $10; Detective #440 VF/NM $35; Ghost #1 FN $32; Green Lantern #89 NM $32; Legion of Superheroes #1 NM $22; Larry Harmon's Laurel and Hardy #1 VF $40; Super DC Giant S-13 GD $38; Supernatural Thrillers #5 NM $12; Tarzan #207 NM $14; Werewolf by Night #32 NM $85; Where Monsters Dwell #1 VF/NM $16.

In addition to reading our comics on those lazy summer afternoons, we also poured over the ads. Accordingly, collectors are now showing a growing interest in those "extras" that could be ordered from comic ads. Classic Red Ryder BB guns are selling for astounding prices, as well as the guitars endorsed by the Western heroes of the '50s. Do you remember in late August heading off to the variety store with mom to buy the school supplies? Of course, the top of the list was anything and everything that had to do with superheroes. These items of our youth are now complimenting our comic collections and making our hobby broader in scope. And, as Martha Stewart puts it so well, ... "it's a good thing."

Books that still guide for way below market value

- Batman #121 (first appearance and origin Mr. Freeze)
- Ghosts #1 (DC Bronze Age)
- Strange Adventures #1
- Super DC Giant S-17 (Romance)
- Marvel Spotlight #2 (1st Werewolf by night)
- Captain America #46 (holocaust cover)
- Showcase #45 (Sgt. Rock)
- Great Comics #3 (Hitler)
- Young Love #107-114 (all square-bound 100 pg. giants)
- Suspense Comics #1 (with all the hoopla over #3, this was bound to hit the limelight)

Collectors should note that the opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

Arnold. The Spirit came from this association. Fine worked for Iger and Eisner, not for Fox or any other publisher.

You say some of these covers have Reed Crandall working on them. To see Fine pencils and Crandall inks look to Uncle Sam in National Comics #12 and 13. Note the masculine folds in the clothing–this is a Crandall trademark. Since you have some part in Overstreet's Price Guide, I'm going to include a Crandall checklist also. Bob Fujitani is Lou Fine's inker and picks up where Fine stops. His art is often mistaken for Fine's. Also, a team of artists such as Fujitani, Rudy Palais, Bill Ward, Al Bryant did Blackhawk, Dollman, and the Ray. All of which are mistaken for Crandall's art. (see Lou Fine checklist) I agree that Blue Beetle is Lou Fine, but Green Mask #1 is not. Unknown. Samson #1 and 2 are Alex Blum.

One more thing before I close. Fine is gone by December 1941 issues. The Black Condor and Crack #19-24 are by Fujitani. Flame #1 reprints Wonderworld #5-9, a total of 45 pages, the most of any book. National #12 and 13 are Fine pencils, Crandall inks, #14 and 15 are Fujitani, #16 and 18 are Fine, #17 is Fujitani, #19-22 are all Fujitani. To see Fujitani at his best, check Ray Storm in Smash #30.

I know this is a lot but I feel that I am correct. Bob Fujitani and Will Eisner are still alive. They can verify these findings. I appreciate your interest in Lou Fine and dearly love his work. Fujitani answered my letter years ago when I first started collecting and helped me identify most of these pieces.

Lee Boyett, Arkansas

Overstreet data on CD

Keep up the GREAT work you guys are doing on CBM. I represent a large faction of comic collectors who attempt to maintain computerized databases of our collections (mostly for insurance purposes). Many of us have perfected our databases–BUT without your help the only way we can keep them up to date is to KEY IN MANUALLY updated values. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE ask the powers that be to sell us Overstreet data on CD-Rom, or floppy disk, or better yet let us subscribe and download it over the net. My fingertips hurt - please help.

Steve Lester via e-mail

Your suggestion is good one and I will definitely pass it along with my endorsement. And as for insurance for comics… whew… that's the most perplexing issue I face as a collector! Is there a CBM reader out there that can help with this pressing issue?? PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE lets us know!!!

More Blue Beetle #6

CBM #47 was another great issue. Michelle Nolan and Pat S. Calhoun never fail to deliver interesting, well-researched articles. I also enjoyed reading the interview with Russ Heath.

I want to answer Owen R. Auer's question about Blue Beetle #6 possibly making it to the newsstands. Regrettably, Blue Beetle #5 was the last issue to be published in comic book format by Charlton and it almost didn't make it. BB #5 was cover-dated November 1968–eleven months after BB #4. Quite a long wait for a book that was supposed to be a bi-monthly.

Blue Beetle #6 was advertised in Charlton house ads with an April 1968 cover date, but never published until Charlton Portfolio printed it in black and white in 1974. Inside the portfolio was a checklist compiled by Don Rosa. The checklist notes that "while advertised" BB #6 "never saw the light of day… until this portfolio." I have enclosed photostats of the cover, indicia page, Ditko's original cover and checklist page.

Anthony F. DeMaria, New York

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Comet Regular $2,000-2,500 | Witch Regular $1,700-2,000 | Easter Bunny with side picture $300 | Psychedelic Flower yellow $800 | Pineapple $1,500-1,800 | Mary Poppins $450-550 | Pez-box Trademark $1,200-1,800 Patent $1,000-1,400 | Bride $600-800

ALSO WANTED: Pony (pink or yellow head), Jiminy Cricket, Panther, Tinkerbell, Giraffe, Pinocchio, Dopey, Snow White, Thor, Knight, Mexican, Astronauts, Pilot, Olive Oyl, Brutus, Orphan Annie, Ball glove with plate/bat, Arithmetic; Any advertising or store display items, old candy.

1950s Space gun silver $250, lavender $600, powder blue $400

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Charlton Mystery Solved!

Owen R. Auer, in the lettercol of CBM #47, asked about the appearance of Blue Beetle #6 from Charlton, which was advertised in several Charlton comics circa 1968. Well, even Charlton admitted they'd made a mistake in advertising that issue, and that the house ad should have been for Blue Beetle #5, which WAS published and did show up on the stands the same month as Mysterious Suspense #1, the Question one-shot.

However, Blue Beetle #6, when Blue Beetle fighting The Specter (not The Spectre from DC), was produced, as the cover ad indicated, but NOT published as a four-color comic. It saw print in black-and-white form in the 1970's. It was published by CPL/Gang publications in Charlton Portfolio #1.

Sometime after that, Charlton began their "house" fanzine (the Charlton Bullseye), and printed a new Question story by Alex Toth, and the conclusion of the long-hanging Captain Atom story begun in Captain Atom #89 (1967) and was not finished until the '70s. (The new CA story, which featured Captain Atom and Nightshade battling The Ghost, was penciled by Steve Ditko and inked by John Byrne; I think it ran in two issues of Charlton Bullseye.)

In addition, Charlton Bullseye ran a two-part Doomsday Plus One story which was later reprinted in Fantagraphics' Doomsday Squad book, a Yang story, and various and sundry other features. Outside of the Doomsday story, I don't think any of them has been reprinted since then. They're worthwhile for the Silver Age collector to check out.

On another topic, I've got another "lost" cover from the Gerber Photo-Journal.... only it's not a blank, it's a repeated cover! I only caught this when I borrowed a copy of Jumbo Comics #150. If you'll note, the Gerber cover photos for Jumbo #130 and 150 are the same.

Apparently Ernie inadvertently repeated the #130 cover by mistake.

Lou Mougin, Texas

Russ Heath

The interview of Russ Heath in Comic Book Marketplace #47 was an incredible read!! This guy really had a very interesting life, from working with icons like Stan Lee to Hugh Hefner!! It's strange how an artist or a writer can go from one area of work to another area, and to think he was drawing everything from Sgt. Rock to Little Annie Fanny!

Comparing Sgt. Rock to Little Annie Fanny

The Weird! The Wild! The Wonderful!

Doc Robinson and Keith Contarino have been stocking exceptional esoteric comics from many genres in preparation for this year's summer conventions. Most of these books will be **displayed for the first time at San Diego**. We will also be at Charlotte and Chicago, carrying our usual quality stock of silver and gold. Below are listed a few of the gems that will be present:

COME SEE US!!

Wonder Comics 4& 5 F+	Wonder Comics 14 NM
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Dagar 1 & 2 VF+	Cannonball Comics 1 VG+
Lost Worlds 6 VG/F	Feature Films 1 F/VF
Shock Susp.Strs. 7 VF	Shadow 8.11& 9.2 VF/NM
More Fun 55 G/VG	Mask Dr. FuManchu F+
Out of This World 1 F	Robotmen Lst Plnt 1 VG+
Strange Worlds 3 F-	Mystery In Space 3 VF
Miss Fury 8 F	Phantom Stranger 3 VG/F
Sheena 4 & 5 VF/NM	Killers 1 F/VF
Hit 9 VG	Military 4 F
Police 4 & 6 F/VF	Police 106, 107, 108 F/VF
Spirit 20 & 22 F/VF	Manhunt 9 VF-
Captain Marvel 14 F+	Steve Canyon 6 VF+
Mad 24-30 F- to VF	Wonderworld 30 F
Phil Rizutto nn VF+	Suspense 11 F+
Pep Comics 17 F	Earthman On Venus nn F
Maltese Falcon (48) F+	Motion Pict. Cmcs 110 F+
Tim Holt 6 & 11 VF	Ghost Rider 1 NM
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would be like comparing Star Trek to Seinfeld. There is no comparison, it's hard to imagine that an artist can be so versatile and make that shift so easily. Not too many artists can do that. I know if I was drawing my favorite character, let's say Captain America and I was offered more money to draw Calvin and Hobbes, I wouldn't be very happy with my new work and would still think of my days of drawing Captain America. But, Russ seems to have made that transition easily. Maybe it had to do with the fact he was able to stay at the Playboy Mansion with all of those bunnies. That is the only thing I could figure.

Russ is an icon of the comic book industry and his life story could be made into a movie... and to think he even worked at Hanna Barbera is even more amazing.

I just recently went to the Oakland Wondercon. One of the highlights of the convention was the Diamond Distributor booth, they ALWAYS have informative people that greet everyone with a smile and they are knowledgeable about comic books!! (And they were giving away free CBMs!)

Paul Dale Roberts via e-mail

Market Highs & Lows

Between the new Overstreet and the Schiffman report, you would think that the market is sizzling for pre 1964 material. Why, when a single high grade book sells for an outrageously high price, does every dealer and collector think that their lower grade copy should net the same results? And more importantly, why does this raise the ceiling in the Guide? Last year's convention results should have corrected the market, yet the prices have climbed once again.

Sure, certain books should have received a spike in price, but all books across the board? Almost all Silver Marvel excluding early FF should have gone down! There is no demand for Silver Marvels except in high grade, and even then the seller usually must submit to a price discount. Archies, Dells, etc. receiving price hikes?

Market highs and lows should be reflected in price guides and not every comic should receive mandatory price increases. The comic market is just like any other, it goes up and it goes down and just like the commodities, stock, and bond markets, the prices fluctuate, sometimes for the worse. I can just imagine dealers across the country opening the new Guide to find out their inventory is only worth half of what it was the day before, but it will never happen. Why? What is so frightening about providing an accurate portrayal of the previous year's market? Not every comic is an Intel or Microsoft, and at least they reflect the trends of the market in which they trade.

On another note, I would just like to say how much I enjoy reading each issue of CBM from cover to cover, keep up the great work!

John D. Lumsden via e-mail

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Split Grades

Commenting on Bill Howard's views on combination grades in Speak Out, I agree with what he says. I find that after examining a comic book, it will often fall into a grade, then I may use a plus or minus to help the buyer get a better feel for the book. On a comic offered for sale, I will always use the lower of two split grades, then add a plus in order to determine if I'm interested in the book at that advertised price.

I don't have any problem with a seller letting me know why a book has been downgraded, as long as it is priced accordingly. Mr. Howard's example of the Silver Surfer for sale could have read: Silver Surfer #4 VG (due to subscription crease) $135. To me, a VG/FN comic is really a VG+, which is certainly different than a comic graded at FN. I think sellers may be doing themselves a disservice by using the split grade.

Mark Peetz, California

You have accurately described my viewpoint!

Cream of the crop

Must say that after reading just about every comic publication on the market for the past 10 years, CBM has consistently shown that it is the cream of the crop. It amazes me that each month you outdo yourselves with the quality of the magazine and the insightful articles, not to mention the fabulous color cover gallery—it makes me want to run out and buy those issues!

Jim Lowery, via e-mail

Major Wood Fan

I just recently purchased a copy of the back issue of Comic Book Marketplace #44 (the Wally Wood issue), and wanted to drop you a line to tell you how much I thoroughly enjoyed the article Link Yaco wrote, "The Forgotten Master—Little known works and moods of Wally Wood." It was superbly written and beautifully illustrated. It delved into parts of the life of this true, American, dyed-in-the-wool comics genius that few people are aware of. It was a masterful job, to say the least.

I have been a major Wally Wood fan for years, and am happy that maybe soon Wally's full influence on the field of comics can be felt and assessed, especially with the help of articles such as these. There has been some good activity on the Wood front lately, with Link's article in the #44 Wood issue, the series biography being done by David Hogan in Outre magazine and J. David Spurlock's new publication, The Complete Wallace Wood Collection (which you can bet I'll be subscribing to). Personally, I don't think Wally ever got his rightful due while he was alive to see it and enjoy it, and hopefully maybe we Wally Wood fans can make the rest of the world aware of his genius and gift, even if he lived a flawed private life (such is often the price of true genius).

Whatever he did personally, it cannot negate the beautiful works he created and left behind for all of us to enjoy forever. I may be stretching a bit, but I think someone could do a decent two-hour documentary on his life, such as on PBS. I would call it, "Wally Wood—Dean of Science Fiction Artists and King of the Bug Eyed Monsters!" I know I would watch it.

Paul R. Abitabile, New York

Eight Colour Pages

Good news, bad news letter. Good news: Keep up the good work; there really is nothing like CBM. Bad news: I have to tell you, I buy your magazine for the middle eight colour pages, especially for the reproductions of the old covers—CBM #31 and 45 were good. Your JLA issue was beautifully done, but why waste one precious colour page on an ad, for CBM? I would much rather have seen four more covers.

If your Adam Strange issue was done like the JLA one, I would have bought it—I didn't. Please consider. Very interested in Canada.

Peter Gaspari, Ontario

Point well taken! Thanks for writing.

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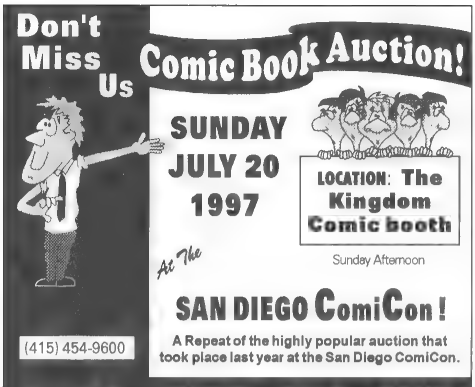

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Giordano, not Adams!

CBM #45 was another great issue! As a long time JLA fan, I was thrilled to see an issue devoted to the group. When reading your editorial, I could relate to your experience of excitement at first seeing the JLA team-up. My reaction was the same when I first saw the cover to JLA #107 in the comic rack at the local 7-11 convenience store.

I remember thinking, "All those heroes for only 20¢. Who needs another comic book?!". Though I enjoyed the main JLA articles immensely, the "Collecting JLA Memorabilia" by Keif Fromm was a true find. As an avid Aquaman fan and Aqua-merchandise collector, I was thrilled to find out about the existence of "Aquaman's Supersea Aquarium". Unfortunately for me, now I have to find one of the dam things! Oh, just one correction. The article lists the artist of the "Aquaman's Supersea Aquarium" eight page mini-comic as Neal Adams. However, from the mini-comic art panels shown on page #58-59, the artist of which was obviously Dick Giordano, not Neal Adams.

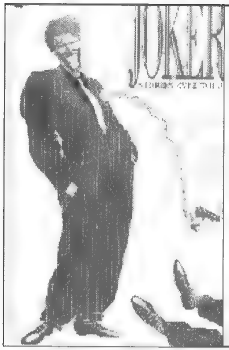
I can see the mistake considering Dick was influenced by Neal's work. The Steve Skeates interview by Bob Brodsky was another hidden gem. Steve's stint on the 1960's Aquaman book in still considered a high point in the characters history by Aqua-fans. It was interesting to see his motivation and original intent with the Aquaman character.

This type of 'behind the scenes' information only adds to the enjoyment of the stories, as well as gives us 'Aqua-fanatics' more chum when analyzing the stories. In fact, I've e-mailed various Aquaman Internet groups letting them know about this CBM issue and the Skeates interview. Let's hope it causes them to seek it out!

Finally, the "In a League of their own" article was a lot of fun. I especially enjoyed the cover likeness comparisons. So much so that I looked through my collection and found an additional "Mystery in Space" #17 cover reprint. This cover was used again for "Strange Adventures" #229 [1971], with the lead story from "Mystery In Space" #17 also appearing.

John Coates, Georgia

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write... we really enjoy your letters! Please note letters maybe edited for content and space. Please send your correspondence to: CBM's Marketplace Mail, P.O. Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178 or FAX (619) 437-1993 Email us at: cbmktpl@ix.netcom.com ■



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